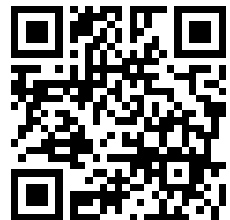
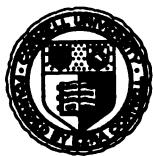

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

GoogleTM books

<https://books.google.com>



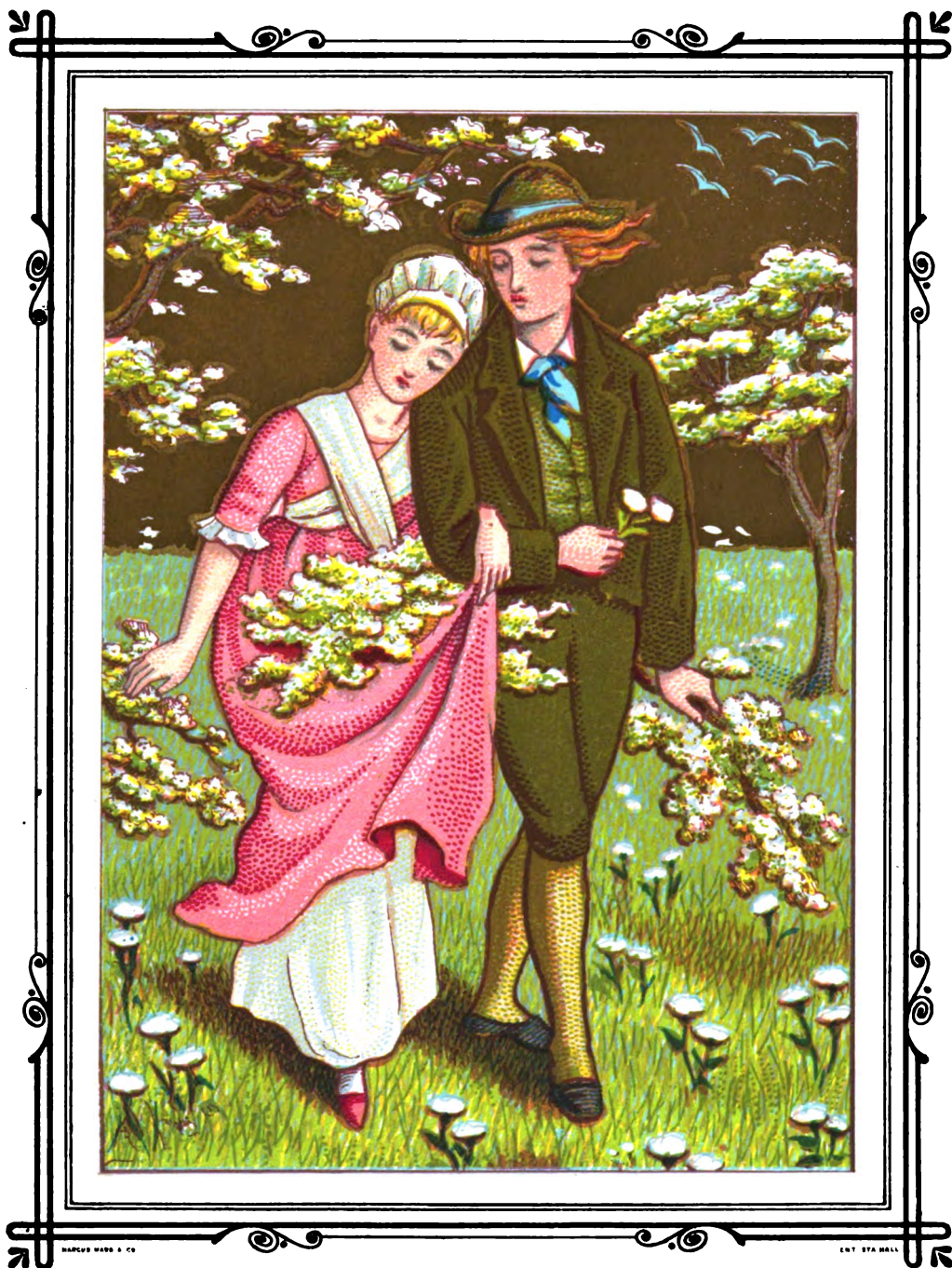
CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



3 1924 066 352 042



· A · M A Y I N G ·

ONCE A WEEK.

FOURTH SERIES.

VOLUME VII.

SEPTEMBER, 1877, TO FEBRUARY, 1878.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICES,
19, TAVISTOCK STREET, W.C.

A.103328

LONDON:
SWEETING AND CO., PRINTERS,
GRAY'S INN ROAD, HOLBORN.

CONTENTS.

Vol. VII. begins with the number for September 1, 1877.

	PAGE		PAGE
Adjusting a Loss	56	Frenchman Puzzled, A	27
After Tiger	76	Famine in India	28
Anecdote of a Dog	183	Fishing Wholesale	36
Another Winter's Tale	50	Found in the Street	50
		French Poacher, A	63
Boar before Breakfast, A	8	Fishes and their Feelings	70
Brown the Bettor	9	Forced Sleep	127
Blue Ridge, The	53	Fight with the Waves, A	162
Beware of Poker	71		
Burglars and their Doings	125	Going to Sea	23
		Great American Falls, The	98
Chaff and Wheat. 1, 17, 31, 45, 59, 73, 87, 101, 115, 131, 143, 157, 174, 186	186	How to Marry Them	27
Climax in Orthography, A	22	Hard Head, A	28
Chinese Legend, A	65	How to Introduce a Patent	52
Chased by a Shark	111	How he Married the Banker's Daughter	178
Cat's Triumph, The	126	History of Miss Corisande	178
Christmas Ditty, A	191		
Chemist, The (Novelette)	1 to 64	Indian Fishery, An	91
		In Difficulties	173
Deaf as a Post	69		
Dreadful Bureau, A	78	Jack Law's Log (Novelette)	1 to 55
Dark Mamma, A	150		
		Landlord's Wager, The	52
Egotist's Note Book. 13, 28, 43, 56, 71, 85, 99, 113, 127, 141, 155, 169, 171, 185	185	Music in Bulgaria	23

	PAGE		PAGE
Mem. on a Moustache, A	49	Sea Lions	83
Mistake, A	49	Something like a Snake	85
Mark Twain's Play	69	Shark Story	134
Monsieur Mocquard's Hard Fate	182	Shooting the Rapids	138
		Spider of Duxton (Novelette)	1 to 50
New Game, A	22		
Out on Business	37	Tit-bits from Helen's Babies	4, 19, 34
Original Sea Serpent, The	79	That Big Frog	24
Oriental Incident, An	154	Tom Harrison's Adventure	68
Out with Pat	167	Tussle with the Child, A	84
		Two-horn the First	148
Poisoned in Despair	11	That Barrel of Salt	155
Penalty of a Borrowed Umbrella, The	66	Things New and Old	183
Pike's Peak, To	105		
Potato Beetle, The	154	Use of Slang, The	12
		Ugly Customer, An	13
Refractory Member, A	13	Under the Yellow Flag. 66, 79, 94, 107, 122, 135, 151, 164, 180, 195	
Rogue Elephant, A	97		
		Very Like a Whale	129
Suicidal Station, A	24	Very Bad Cold, A	179
Seven Keys to a Safe	40		
Storyteller's Dilemma, A	42	Wonderful Weapon, A	23
Scientific Job, A	42		
Seeing the Real	119	Yankee Competition Case	41

NOVELETTES IN THIS VOLUME—

JACK LAW'S LOG, by G. MANVILLE FENN.

SPIDER OF DUXTON.

THE CHEMIST, by G. MANVILLE FENN.

ONCE A WEEK.

FOURTH SERIES.

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER I.—FIRE AND WATER.

AND for the moment it seemed as though the Devil had taken possession of his soul, for he stood looking at his struggling companion without stretching forth a hand to save him.

"Would he were dead, would he were dead," a voice seemed to mutter in his ear.

And Stephen Vaughan stood upon the edge of the mill-pool with his features distorted and vile looking, while Frank struggled fruitlessly to extricate himself from his perilous position. Every moment the water closed over his face, while every effort to free his leg from the broken boat merely caused the fragile old skiff to float farther from the shore. Another minute would have been Frank's last, when Stephen Vaughan threw up his arms as if beating something off, gave a sharp cry, and then dashed at full speed into the deep water, making it foam and bubble round him, and the skiff to dance as he clove his way with vigorous strokes.

He was soon beside his drowning friend and supporting his head, when it became an easy task to guide the boat to the shore; but it was some few minutes before the exhausted Frank could recover himself sufficiently to draw his foot from the broken planks; and all this while Madeline Glebeley and Alice Vaughan stood speechless with terror, and as it were chained to the spot.

And then it almost seemed as if the Devil, evicted from the soul of Stephen Vaughan, was now looking on from one of the mill windows; for there was a grim Satanic visage staring out upon the scene: but it was only Sampson Elton, who, as soon as Frank was out of danger, turned away, muttering—"Curse him!"

And the cursed one was his stepson.

Tom Phipps, who considered himself, and was also allowed to be, up to a thing or two, said that Waveley was a deuced pretty place in summer, but a dog's hole in winter. He gave no opinion as to spring or autumn, but came at all seasons, and stopped till obliged by business to return to town. Milton, who was about as far removed from Tom Phipps as pole from pole, said something about the mind being its own place, and that it could make what it liked of its abode, and therefore though it is possible that Waveley may have been a purgatorial place to some, yet there were others who could look upon it as a heaven; and for description—it was a country place fifty miles from London.

But Tom Phipps was now most likely making his pen scrawl over sheets of foolscap paper in a close office in that city, where, since his release from the thralldom of Edgeton high-school, he had been

"chained by the leg"—his own words—while his schoolfellows, Frank Henderson, stepson of old Elton at the mill, and Stephen Vaughan, Squire Vaughan's son, from the Hall, went, in the one instance, to Cambridge; and, in the other, to his old home to learn farming, which he did by spending his days in shooting, fishing, hunting, coursing, and such other agreeable pursuits as serve to while away the time of a country gentleman.

As for Sampson Elton of Waveley Mill, he was as ill-looking and ill-conditioned a man as ever wormed himself into the confidence of his master's widow, married her, and then taking possession of the snug business and farm, bullied the poor woman, whose marriage had already most thoroughly excited the disgust of all who knew her, but especially that of Squire Vaughan, who started so when he heard the news that he broke his pipe, spilt his hot gin-and-water all over his legs, and then swore that it was all humbug, for he did not believe any woman would be fool enough to marry such an ill-looking thief.

Of course, nobody told this to Sampson Elton, but he got to know it somehow, and shook his fist at old Vaughan the next time he passed him and the farmer's burly back was turned; then he went home and snarled at his wife, and ever after made himself a regular brute to his stepson, Frank Henderson, who was but a boy then, but a great favourite with the Squire, who, in conjunction with the Reverend Charles Glebeley, the Rector, was the lad's guardian.

And now it was a summer's day, and floating down the stream—the little Wave—easily, lightly—with an occasional dip of the oar given most lazily to keep the boat's head right,—letting the skiff float along the glassy surface, heedless of the long pull back against the stream, on went the little boating party round bend after bend of the shining river.

Frank and Stephen were at the oars, and they must have been thinking of the coolness of the evening, or they would never have allowed the boat to have its way unchecked for so long. But the young men were not alone: Madeline Glebeley was there; dark-haired, dark-eyed, and with the soft flush of health mantling in her cheek: Alice Vaughan was there too, blue-eyed, sunny-haired, and bright, nay, sparkling in feature—for a more animated countenance could not have cheered the eye; taper-waisted, with swelling bust, and hips; almost diminutive in size, lips that would have betrayed an anchorite, or even a Druid had he been mistletoe-cutting; she was a perfect little beauty, even to the possessing of well-formed hands and feet; while those who gazed upon her arch dimpled face, and saw her winning ways, were but too glad to own allegiance to such a little queen. The

tempting lips were of coral hue, and within them glistened teeth of the pearliest, and again within those teeth was a tiny red tongue—

Yes—there was a tiny red tongue within those teeth.

Tom Phipps once said, that Nature in giving her such beautiful teeth, by way of compensation placed all the tartar upon her tongue; and he was in dread ever after lest she should know that he made such a remark.

The Squire used to call her his little blossom, and truly she was a little flower—a rose; but the thorns which studded the frail stem were sharp of the sharpest.

And this was the freight of Frank Henderson's old skiff as the light vessel floated along upon that glorious afternoon, sending the frightened fish darting along the shallows like arrows of silver. The sun poured down his beams with all the fervour of July, and, newly awakened from their watery birth-place, the dragon-flies hovered above the heads of the voyagers. The bright green reeds hung their tapering leaves over the water, motionless but for the washing of the stream, while over the deep pools the yellow lily had spread a shade of broad shining fronds, with here and there a golden chalice floating upon the surface. The banks were studded with the flowers that rejoice to luxuriate in the moist meadows; but, after all, there were none to compare with the fair blossoms that sat beneath the little awning in the boat's stern, screened from the sun's scorching rays, and framed, as it were, in the little nook. Frank and Stephen were stripped, after the fashion affected by the modern disciples of the celebrated Jolly Young Waterman, but little work was done, and even the conversation had flagged as they still floated on and on—now where the river was deep, and calm, and sluggish, or again where it was rushing and turbulent, with hardly water enough to bear up their little vessel, which ever and anon grated upon the gravelly bottom.

So the conversation had somewhat flagged, but the cause could not have been the heat, for the maidens were sheltered from the sun, and had removed their hats to let the wanton breeze play through their hair, when it was plainly to be seen that the rowers would have given something to have been *pro tem.* a wanton breeze, allowed to play with the flowing locks unchidden. Unevenness of numbers was not the cause of the silence, for no party could have been better arranged, that is, as far as appearances went. But it was evident that something was amiss, for Madeline looked sad and troubled, and Alice half scornful, while her blue eyes flashed, and her little nostrils extended as though she snuffed the war from afar.

Now it must be taken into consideration that the ladies here described had never known the polishing influences of a London season, but had been accustomed to dining at the unfashionable hours of one and two, and not unfrequently then partaking of viands which their own fair hands had helped to prepare. While, as to society, the circle of acquaintances owned by a gentleman farmer, or a rector in a remote agricultural village, is not, generally speaking, of the largest.

"Why, Ally," said Stephen, throwing away the stump of a cigar, so that it fell with a fizz in the water, "Why, Ally, what's the matter? You look quite pettish."

"Do I?" said the young lady addressed; "perhaps it is from *ennui* caused by the burdensome conversation."

"There, Frank," said Stephen, "that's an arrow for you, my boy. Didn't you hear it whizz? Why, it must have gone right to the mark—into the bull's eye—bull-frog's eye. Let's see, A, Alice; A was an archer, and shot at a frog;—Come, frog, jump."

"What a genius you are, Steve," said his sister. "It is almost a pity we cannot make a martyr of you, by pelting you to death. It is the only way in which you are ever likely to be immortalised. But then we have nothing here but cherries, and I'm sure their stones would make no impression upon your great thick head."

And then Alice gave a quick glance at Frank, and coloured with vexation, as if ashamed of what she had said.

"There, Frank," said Stephen, good-humouredly, "let this be a lesson for you. You are given enough to grumbling; but only think what a happy dog you are to have no sister to snub you. For goodness' sake take my part, or I shall be finished off."

"And I've no doubt," said Alice, "that your friend, Mr. Henderson, will write your epitaph—something in one of the dead languages, freshly imported from Cambridge. I could suggest something."

"Then pray let us have it," said Frank.

"Why 'Dele,' rubbed out," said Sunny-hair, with her face a-flame.

"No, that wouldn't do," said Stephen; "and besides, I'm too busy to be rubbed out yet. I've no end of work to get done. Let's see, there's Waveley Bottom to be drained—"

"And two boxes of cigars to smoke," interposed his sister.

"And Ponto to break in," continued Stephen.

"And my lessons in fishing," said Madeline, but colouring directly as if vexed that she had spoken.

"There, if we go on at that rate," cried Stephen, "we shall never have done; and I shall find so much work that I shall—"

"Be more stupid than ever," said his sister, interrupting.

"Exactly so, Ally," said the young Hercules; for the climate of Waveley had been most favourable for the development of Stephen Vaughan's bodily proportions; but then his progenitor had set him a most worthy example in that respect. "Exactly so, Ally, I dare say you are right. But if a man—I suppose I am correct in calling myself a man? but if you think not, ladies and gentleman, why I must wait till I grow a little bigger."

"No, don't do that, Steve," cried Frank, laughing; "don't, for your tailor's sake. But I think we may set him down as a man now, eh, ladies? How often do you shave, Steve?"

"Twice a week," said Stephen, complacently.

"Then he must be a man," said Frank, laughing; "for Captain Marryat established two shaves a week as a proof of manhood."

"Well," cried Stephen, "when you have done I'll finish; but look out, or we shall get aground. Now pull, both together; that's it."

The boat being once more in mid-stream, Stephen continued,—

"Well, I was going to say, Miss Glebeley, if a man happens to be naturally stupid, he ought not to be blamed for it, ought he? Ally here says I'm a donkey. Very well. If I am an ass, and act up faithfully to my part, I may be a very decent kind of ass in my way, and so after all be a very good sort of fellow."

"Ass-tonishing," said Alice. "Don't answer him, Maddy, he does not deserve it."

"Perhaps," said Frank, "Miss Glebeley is enjoying the skirmish, and finds the prevailing acidity somewhat refreshing."

Alice coloured up to the parting of her hair, and was about to make a sharp retort, but it would not come; and the reproachful look in her eyes was soon dimmed by the tears of vexation she in vain tried to keep down.

"There, Frank," said Stephen, "you've put your foot in it, old fellow; so the sooner you try and make peace the better. I vote for a walk under the trees;" saying which he gave a stroke or two with his oar, and turned the boat's head in amongst the reeds, just where a thick grove of horse chestnuts bent their boughs almost to the water's edge. As he spoke the bow of the skiff went rustling in the pliant growth, when he sprang out and secured the chain to a small bush. Frank then landed and assisted Madeline to step ashore, when she immediately took Stephen Vaughan's offered arm, and Frank was left to take charge of the little offended beauty.

Now at this moment Frank felt in rather an uncomfortable position: he was too generous to wilfully wound, and though most unwilling to be in any way demonstrative towards Alice Vaughan, yet upon the present occasion he felt bound to try and heal the little scratch he had so thoughtlessly made. But there was something else just at that moment of which he did not quite approve, and that was the apparent eagerness with which Madeline had taken their companion's arm—it almost seemed as if the walk had been pre-arranged. So Frank Henderson felt a sensation similar to that which burnt up the heart of the swarthy Othello; for, like many more short-sighted mortals, he had not sufficient length of wisdom to plumb the depths of woman's heart.

Altogether, matters had gone as unfortunately as they possibly could in Frank's estimation, and so he told himself as he walked with his companion beneath the shady trees; but then both Alice and Stephen Vaughan thought differently.

Stephen was striding along as hard as he could with any degree of decency draw his companion with him, while Alice seemed as much disposed to linger where she then was. Then, to change sides, there was a mutual feeling of attraction hard at work inciting Frank and Madeline to get closer together, and the latter was regretting the haste with which she had chosen her partner; and of course fate could not favour both parties at one and the same time.

Alice listened very poutingly to the excuses tendered for her acceptance, and haughtily declined to bestow the sought-for pardon; though all the while her little heart was beating faster with the pleasure she felt, and her eyes would grow more subdued and softened, even though Frank was so stupid that he would not look down into them. And of course these eyes dared not look up into his, any more than their owner could venture to lean upon his arm; but Alice thought of what she would have done had she been Frank, and Frank somebody else; for the little maiden was very romantic in her little way, and knew perfectly well what was the correct thing in such cases, as taught by her favourite authors—Bulwer Lytton, James, and Ainsworth.

Somehow or another there was quite a feeling of disappointment crept over the little maiden's spirit as she granted the asked-for pardon, from the matter turning out so very ordinary and commonplace.

In her vivid imagination there was a very pleasing picture of the chestnut glade wherein they stood, for amidst the checkery shade there was the figure of a Frank leaning over, while supporting the light form of an Alice, which nestled closely to the manly breast; and then, as eyes gazed in eyes, forgiveness was being breathed between the half-parted rosy lips, but quite inaudibly—so softly, in fact, that those of Frank were compelled to touch them, and inhale the pardon in a sweet sigh of so magnetic a nature, that lips clung to lips for goodness knows how many seconds.

But then Alice's was like other people's day-dreams, ready to vanish in an instant, so she only sighed gently, and Frank did not ask why it was, but actually thought so little of the situation that he said,—

"Had we not better try and catch up to them? They are quite out of sight."

Alice gave her little head a toss and walked silently on, and at the end of a few minutes they came suddenly upon the sought-for couple—Madeline looking both agitated and conscious, and Stephen most ineffably sheepish; while as for Frank, he was unconsciously pressing Alice's little hand so tightly against his side, that she could feel his heart go "thump, thump," when the little maiden's spirits rose, and she gently returned the pressure.

Alas, poor Alice!

One might almost say, Alas, poor Stephen! as well, for he too was just then feeling most bitterly cut and disappointed. He had been trying to make a confession, or declaration, or something of that kind, and now the feeling was on him most strongly that he had made a mess instead. His awkward speeches had been met by a pained and frightened look that quite startled him; while the startled feeling was directly succeeded by, first anger, and then shame; which latter strongly predominated on the arrival of Frank Henderson. But just then the eyes of the young men met, when the sharp flash from those of Frank acted like a spark on gun-powder, for there was an instant explosion in the breast of Stephen Vaughan; and as the smoke cleared from before his mental vision, he saw what

he had never seen before, while a fresh emotion clutched him hardly by the heart.

But Alice was quite brightening. She had been in misery, for with that tongue of hers she felt it impossible to avoid saying sharp things—sayings which were barbed, and even at times quite venomous. And then when one of these keen verbal arrows was sent flying at Frank, she always made the discovery that it was barbed at both ends, while her own bore all the venom.

There they were, strolling about in the chestnut grove, all trying very hard to appear light-hearted and unconcerned. Frank darted off into a fresh subject every two minutes, commencing with horse-chestnuts, and ending with the metempsychosis; but it was very hard work, for no one would pick up the innumerable conversational gauntlets he threw down.

One thing, however, seemed to have been arrived at almost by common consent—*tête-à-tête*-ism was out of the question any more that day; and do what they would, it seemed that a wet blanket was held suspended above the heads of the party to keep on drip, drip, drip, till they were all miserable. Alice tried to be very gay, even though Frank had turned quite chilly since there was that slight pressure of his arm; but her gaiety only culminated in a stinging remark directed at her brother, upon whom it acted something like a verbal gadfly on the hide of a metaphorical bull. Madeline appeared quite in pain. However, a semblance of gaiety was kept up, as if to make up for the dreary nature of the early part of the trip; but all was of the most transparent and unsatisfactory character. Frank, and Stephen, and Alice, would one and all have scouted the idea as absurd, but there, most decidedly, in the cup they were sipping was a tinge of the poison known as jealousy, and strangely it acted upon them: Alice was disposed to bite her lips till they were redder than ever, and say spiteful things; Frank would have liked to be alone; while Stephen felt a gnawing pain, which caused him to direct fierce and ill-veiled glances at his old schoolfellow.

Nature could not stand it any longer: she had spread all her beauties before the party in the most lavish way, laughing around them to impart the joy she felt, but all was of no avail, so turning spiteful, when the boat was once more afloat, she clouded over the sky, and sent down a pitiless rain which drenched the voyagers in a very few minutes.

A pleasant termination to an afternoon's excursion at any time, without hearts being all out of tune. But there was nothing else for it, and the young men rowed savagely on through the pitted water as the rain came hissing down, and for long enough not a word was spoken. The awning was drawn tightly round the maidens, so that they were invisible, and conversation was of course cut off in that direction; so alone with their thoughts the rowers toiled on till the broad mill-pool was reached, when after the ladies had landed, Frank stepped back hastily into the boat to moor her by the wooden bridge, slipped upon the wet seat, and his foot came heavily upon the thin planking of the bottom.

It was the work of an instant, for as the boat, urged by the impetus he had given it, floated from

the landing-place, Frank's foot went through the frail woodwork, and he fell back over the side, but, as it were, so securely trapped, that he was helpless. He toiled, he struggled, and writhed about in the water, but every effort seemed fruitless; and though at another time he could freely have laughed at another in so apparently ridiculous a predicament, yet but for the saving hand of Stephen Vaughan, there would have been the corpse of a drowned man to get ashore.

Tit-Bits from Helen's Babies.

"NOW, Uncle Harry, we'll have the whistles, I guess."

I acted upon the suggestion, and led the way to the woods. I had not had occasion to seek a hickory sapling before for years; not since the war, in fact, when I learned how hot a fire small hickory sticks would make. I had not sought wood for whistles since—gracious! nearly a quarter of a century ago. The dissimilar associations called up by these recollections threatened to put me in a frame of mind which might have resulted in a bad poem, had not my nephews kept up a lively succession of questions such as no one but children can ask. The whistles completed, I was marched, with music, to the place where "jacks" grew. It was just such a place as boys instinctively delight in—low, damp, and boggy, with a brook hiding treacherously away under overhanging ferns and grasses. The children knew by sight the plant which bore the "jacks," and every discovery was announced by a piercing shriek of delight. At first I looked hurriedly towards the brook as each yell clove the air; but, as I became accustomed to it, my attention was diverted by some exquisite ferns. Suddenly, however, a succession of shrieks announced that something was wrong, and across a large fern I saw a small face in a great deal of agony. Budge was hurrying to the relief of his brother, and was soon as deeply imbedded as Toddie was in the rich black mud at the bottom of the brook. I dashed to the rescue, stood astride the brook, and offered a hand to each boy, when a treacherous tuft of grass gave way, and, with a glorious splash, I went in myself. This accident turned Toddie's sorrow to laughter; but I can't say I made light of my misfortune on that account. To fall into clean water is not pleasant, even when one is trout-fishing; but to be clad in white pants, and suddenly drop nearly knee-deep in the lap of Mother Earth, is quite a different thing. I hastily picked up the children, and threw them upon the bank, and then wrathfully strode out myself, and tried to shake myself as I have seen a Newfoundland dog do. The shake was not a success—it caused my trouser-leg to flap dismally about my ankles, and sent the streams of loathsome ooze trickling down into my shoes. My hat, of drab felt, had fallen off by the brook-side, and been plentifully spattered as I got out. I looked at my youngest nephew with speechless indignation.

"Uncle Harry," said Budge, "'twas real good of the Lord to let you be with us, else Toddie might have been drowned."

"Yes," said I, "and I shouldn't have much—"

"Ucken Hawwy," cried Toddie, running impetuously toward me, pulling me down, and patting my cheek with his muddy black hand, "I loves you for takin' me out de water."

"I accept your apology," said I, "but let's hurry home."

There was but one residence to pass, and that, thank fortune, was so densely screened by shrubbery that the inmates could not see the road. To be sure, we were on a favourite driving road, but we could reach home in five minutes, and we might dodge into the woods if we heard a carriage coming. Hah! There came a carriage already, and we—was there ever a sorrier-looking group? There were ladies in the carriage too—could it be?—of course it was—did the evil spirit, which guided those children always, send an attendant for Miss Mayton before he began operations? There she was, anyway—cool, neat, dainty, trying to look collected, but severely flushed by the attempt. It was of no use to drop my eyes, for she had already recognized me; so I turned to her a face which I think must have been just the one—unless more defiant—that I carried into two or three cavalry charges.

"You seem to have been having a real good time together," said she, with a conventional smile, as the carriage passed. "Remember, you're all going to call on me to-morrow afternoon."

When the children were put to bed, and I had no one but my thoughts for companions, I spent a delightful hour or two in imagining as possible some changes of which I had never dared to think before.

On Monday morning I was in the garden at sunrise. Toddie was to carry his expiatory bouquet to Miss Mayton that day, and I proposed that no pains should be spared to make his atonement as handsome as possible. I canvassed carefully every border, bed, and detached flowering plant, until I had as accurate an idea of their possibilities as if I had inventoried the flowers in pen and ink. This done, I consulted the servant as to the unsoiled clothing of my nephews. She laid out their entire wardrobe for my inspection, and after a rigid examination of everything, I selected the suits which the boys were to wear in the afternoon. Then I told the girl that the boys were going with me after dinner to call on some ladies, and that I desired that she should wash and dress them carefully.

"Tell me just what time you'll start, sir, and I'll begin an hour beforehand," said she. "That's the only way to be sure that they don't disgrace you."

For breakfast we had, among other things, some stewed oysters served in soup-plates.

"Oh, Todd," shrieked Budge, "there's the turtle-plates again—oh, aint I glad!"

"Oo—ee—turtle-pyates," squealed Toddie.

"What on earth do you mean, boys?" I demanded.

"I'll show you," said Budge, jumping down from his chair, and bringing his plate of oysters cautiously towards me. "Now you just put your head down underneath my plate, and look up, and you'll see a turtle."

For a moment I forgot that I was not at a restaurant, and I took the plate, held it up, and examined its bottom.

"There!" said Budge, pointing to the trade-mark, in colours, of the makers of the crockery, "don't you see the turtle?"

I abruptly ordered Budge to his seat, unmoved even by Toddie's remark, that—

"Dey ish turtles, but dey can't kwawl around like udder turtles."

After breakfast I devoted a great deal of fussy attention to myself. Never did my own wardrobe seem so meagre and ill-assorted; never did I cut myself so many times while shaving; never did I use such unsatisfactory shoe-polish. I finally gave up in despair my effort to appear genteel, and devoted myself to the bouquet. I cut almost flowers enough to dress a church, and then remorselessly excluded every one which was in the least particular imperfect. In making the bouquet, I enjoyed the benefit of my nephews' assistance and counsel, and took enforced part in conversation which flowers suggested.

"Ucken Hawwy," said Toddie, "ish heaven all like this, wif pretty f'owers? Cos I don't see what ze angels ever tums out for if 'tis."

"Uncle Harry," said Budge, "when the leaves all go up and down, and wriggle around so, are they talking to the wind?"

"I—I guess so, old fellow."

"Who are you making that bouquet for, Uncle Harry?" asked Budge.

"For a lady—for Miss Mayton—that lady that saw us all muddy yesterday afternoon," said I.

"Oh, I like her," said Budge. "She looks so nice and pretty—just like a cake—just as if she was good to eat—oh, I just love her, don't you?"

"Well, I respect her very highly, Budge."

"Spect? What does 'spect mean?"

"Why, it means that I think she is a lady—a real pleasant lady—just the nicest sort of lady in the world—the sort of person I'd like to see every day, and like to see her better than any one else."

"Oh, why, 'spect and love means just the same thing, don't they, Uncle Har—"

"Budge," I exclaimed, somewhat hastily, "run ask Maggie for a piece of string—quick!"

"All right," said Budge, moving off, "but they *do*, don't they?"

At two o'clock I instructed Maggie to dress my nephews, and at three we started to make our call. To carry Toddie's bouquet, and hold a hand of each boy, so to keep them from darting into the hedges for grasshoppers, and the gutters for butterflies, was no easy work, but I managed to do it. As we approached Mrs. Clarkson's boarding-house, I felt my hat was over one ear, and my cravat awry; but there was no opportunity to rearrange them, for I saw Alice Mayton on the piazza, and felt that she saw me. Handing the bouquet to Toddie, and promising him the sticks of candy if he would be careful and not drop it, we entered the garden. The moment we were inside the hedge, and Toddie saw a man going over the lawn with a lawn-mower, he shrieked, "Oh, deresh a cutter-grass!" and dropped the bouquet with the carelessness born of perfect ecstasy. I snatched it before it reached the ground, dragged the offending youth up the walk, saluted Miss Mayton, and told Toddie to give the bouquet

to the lady. This he succeeded in doing; but as Miss Mayton thanked him, and stooped to kiss him, he wriggled off the piazza like a little eel, shouted "Tum on!" to his brother, and a moment later my nephews were following the "cutter-grass" at a respectful distance in the rear.

"Those are my sister's best children in the world, Miss Mayton," said I.

"Bless the little darlings!" replied the lady; "I do love to see children enjoy themselves."

"So do I," said I, "when I'm not responsible for their well-being; but if the effort I've expended on those boys had been directed towards the interests of my employers, those worthy gentlemen would consider me invaluable."

Suddenly a compound shriek arose from the lawn, and all the ladies sprang to their feet. I followed their example, setting my teeth firmly and viciously, hoping that whichever nephew had been hurt was badly hurt. We saw Toddie running towards us, with one hand in his mouth; while Budge ran beside him, exclaiming—

"Poor little Toddie! Don't cry! Does it hurt you awful? Never mind, Uncle Harry'll comfort you. Don't cry, Toddie de-ar."

Both boys reached the piazza, and clambered up, Budge exclaiming—

"Oh, Uncle Harry, Toddie put his fingers in the little wheels of the cutter-grass, an' it turned just the least little biddie, an' it hurted him."

But Toddie ran up to me, clasped my legs, and sobbed—

"Sing 'Toddie one boy day.'"

My blood seemed to freeze. I could have choked that dreadful child, suffering though he was. I stooped over him, caressed him, promised him candy, took out my watch and gave it to him to play with; but he returned to his original demand. A lady—the homeliest in the party—suggested that she should bind up his hand, and I inwardly blessed her; but he reiterated his request for 'Toddie one boy day,' and sobbed pitifully.

"What *does* he mean?" asked Miss Mayton.

"He wants Uncle Harry to sing 'Charlie boy one day,'" explained Budge. "He always wants that song when he's hurt any way."

"Oh, do sing it to him, Mr. Burton," pleaded Miss Mayton; and all the other ladies exclaimed, "Oh, do!"

I wrathfully picked him up in my arms, and hummed the air of the detested song.

"Sit in a wockin' chair," sobbed Toddie.

I obeyed; and then my tormentor remarked—

"You don't sing the wydes (words). I wants the wydes."

I sang the words as softly as possible, with my lips close to his ear; but he roared—

"Sing louder."

"I don't know any more of it, Toddie," I exclaimed, in desperation.

"Oh, I'll tell it all to you, Uncle Harry," said Budge.

And there, before that audience, and her, I was obliged to sing that dreadful doggerel, line for line, as Budge repeated it. My teeth were set tight, my brow grew clammy, and I gazed upon

Toddie with terrible thoughts in my mind. No one laughed—I grew so desperate that a titter would have given relief. At last I heard some one whisper—

"See how he loves him! Poor man! he's in perfect agony over the little fellow."

Had not the song reached its natural end just then, I believe I should have tossed my wounded nephew over the piazza rail. As it was, I set him upon his feet, announced the necessity of our departure, and began to take leave, when Miss Mayton's mother insisted that we should stay to dinner.

"For myself I should be delighted, Mrs. Mayton," said I; "but my nephews have hardly learned company manners yet. I'm afraid my sister wouldn't forgive me if she heard I had taken them out to dinner."

"Oh, I'll take care of the little dears," said Miss Mayton; "they'll be good with me, I know."

"I couldn't be so unkind as to let you try it, Miss Mayton," I replied.

But she insisted, and the pleasure of submitting to her will was so great that I would have risked even greater mischief. So Miss Mayton sat down to dinner with Budge upon one side and Toddie on the other; while I was fortunately placed opposite, from which position I could indulge in warning winks and frowns. The soup was served. I signalled the boys to tuck their napkins under their chins, and then turned to speak to the lady on my right. She politely inclined her head towards me, but her thoughts seemed elsewhere; following her eyes, I beheld my youngest nephew with his plate upraised in both hands, his head on the table-cloth, and his eyes turned painfully upward. I dared not speak, for fear he would drop the plate. Suddenly he withdrew his head, put on an angelic smile, tilted his plate so that part of its contents sought refuge in the folds of Miss Mayton's dainty, snowy dress, while the offender screamed—

"Oo—ee!—zha turtle on my pyate!—Budgie, zha turtle on my pyate!"

Budge was about to raise his plate, when he caught my eye and desisted. Poor Miss Mayton actually looked discomposed, for the first time in her life, so far as I knew or could imagine. She recovered quickly, however, and treated that wretched boy with the most Christian forbearance and consideration during the remainder of the meal. When the dessert was finished, she quickly excused herself; while I removed Toddie to a secluded corner of the piazza, and favoured him with a lecture which caused him to howl pitifully, and compelled me to caress him and undo all the good which my rebukes had done. Then he and Budge removed themselves to the lawn, while I awaited Miss Mayton's reappearance, to offer an apology for Toddie, and to make our adieux. It was the custom of the ladies at Mrs. Clarkson's to stroll about the lovely rural walks after dinner and until twilight; and on this particular evening they departed in twos and threes, leaving me to make my apology without witnesses. I was rather sorry they went; it was not pleasant to feel that I was principally responsible for my nephew's blunder, and to have no oppor-

tunity to allay my conscience-pangs by conversation. It seemed to me Miss Mayton was for ever in appearing; I even called up my nephews, to have some one to talk to.

Suddenly she appeared, and in an instant I fervently blessed Toddie and the soup which the child had sent upon its aimless wanderings. I would rather pay the price of a fine dress than try to describe Miss Mayton's attire; I can only say that in style, colour, and ornament it became her perfectly, and set off the beauties of a face which I had never before thought was more than pleasing and intelligent. Perhaps the anger which was excusable after Toddie's graceless caper had something to do with putting unusual colour into her cheeks, and a brighter sparkle than usual in her eyes. Whatever was the cause, she looked queenly, and I half imagined that I detected in her face a gleam of satisfaction at the involuntary start which her unexpected appearance caused me to make. She accepted my apology for Toddie with queenly graciousness; and then, instead of proposing that we should follow the other ladies, as a moment before I had hoped she would, she dropped into a chair. I accepted the invitation; the children should have been in bed half an hour before, but my sense of responsibility had departed when Miss Mayton appeared. The little scamps were safe until they should perform some new and unexpected act of impishness. They retired to one end of the piazza, and busied themselves in experiments upon a large Newfoundland dog, while I, the happiest man alive, talked with the glorious woman before me, and enjoyed the spectacle of her radiant beauty.

Suddenly a small shadow came from behind us, and stood between us, and the voice of Budge remarked—

"Uncle Harry 'spects you, Miss Mayton."

"Suspects me?—of what, pray?" exclaimed the lady, patting my nephew's cheek.

"Budge!" said I—I feel that my voice rose nearly to a scream—"Budge, I must beg of you to respect the sanctity of confidential communications."

"What is it, Budge?" persisted Miss Mayton. "You know the old adage, Mr. Burton: 'Children and fools speak the truth.' Of what does he suspect me, Budge?"

"Taint *sus*-pect at all," said Budge, "it's *es*-pect."

"Expect?" echoed Miss Mayton.

"No, not 'ex,' it's *es*-pect. I know all about it, 'cause I asked him. Expect is what folks do when they think you're nice, and likes to talk to you, and—"

"Respect is what the boy is trying to say, Miss Mayton," I interrupted, to prevent what I feared might follow. "Budge has a terrifying faculty for asking questions; and the result of some of them, this morning, was my endeavour to explain to him the nature of the respect in which gentlemen hold ladies."

"Yes," continued Budge, "I know all about it. Only Uncle Harry don't say it right. What he calls *espect* I calls *love*."

There was an awkward pause—it seemed an age. Another blunder, and all on account of those dreadful children. I could think of no possible way to

turn the conversation; stranger yet, Miss Mayton could not do so either. Something must be done—I could at least be honest: come what would, I would be honest.

"Miss Mayton," said I, hastily, earnestly, but in a very low tone, "Budge is a marplot, but he is a truthful interpreter for all that. But whatever my fate may be, please do not suspect me of falling suddenly into love for a holiday's diversion. My malady is of some months' standing. I—"

"I want to talk some," observed Budge. "You talk all the whole time. I—I—when I loves anybody, I kisses them."

Miss Mayton gave a little start, and my thoughts followed each other with unimagined rapidity. She did not turn the conversation—it could not be possible that she could not. She was not angry, or she would have expressed herself. Could it be that—

I bent over her, and acted upon Budge's suggestion. As she displayed no resentment, I pressed my lips a second time to her forehead; then she raised her head slightly, and I saw, in spite of darkness and shadows, that Alice Mayton had surrendered at discretion. Then I heard Budge say—

"I wants to kiss you, too."

And I saw my glorious Alice snatch the little scamp into her arms, and treat him with more affection than I ever imagined was in her nature. Then she seized Toddie, and gave him a few tokens of forgiveness—I dare not think they were of gratitude.

Suddenly, two or three ladies came upon the piazza.

"Come, boys," said I. "Then I'll call with the carriage to-morrow at three, Miss Mayton. Good evening."

"Good evening," replied the sweetest voice in the world; "I'll be ready at three."

"Budge," said I, as soon as we were fairly outside the hedge-gate, "what do you like better than anything else in the world?"

"Candy," said Budge, very promptly.

"What next?"

"Oranges."

"What next?"

"Oh, figs, an' raisins, an' dear little kittie-kitties, an' drums, an' picture-books, an' little bakin'-dishes to make mud pies in, an' turtles, an' little wheelbarrows."

"Anything else?"

"Oh, yes—great big black dogs—an' a goat, an' a waggon for him to draw me in."

"Very well, old fellow—you shall have every one of those things to-morrow."

"Oh—h—h—h—h!" exclaimed Budge. "I guess you're something like the Lord, ain't you?"

"What makes you think so, Budge?"

"Oh, 'cause you do such lots of things at once. But aint poor Tod goin' to have nuffin'?"

"Yes, everything he wants. What would you like, Toddie?"

"Wants a candy cigar," replied Toddie.

"What else?"

"Don't want nuffin' else—don't want to be boddered wif lots of fings."

A Boar before Breakfast.

"WILD boars?" said Dick. "Ah! there's some fun in wild boar hunting. There's nothing I like better. I always track them to their retreat, and attack them there with nothing but a knife."

The wine was very good, and so he seemed to think; and, after each replenishment of his glass, he grew more excited and boastful.

Every one laughed.

"Have you many of those animals in England?" asked a Frenchman at the other end of the table, with mock politeness.

Dick coloured, but took no notice of the question.

"I should like to see you do it," said our host, a Polish gentleman, to whom my brother Dick and I had come with a letter of introduction a week before.

"So should I," said the Frenchman, M. Allarde, with a sneer.

"Give me the chance, and you shall," he answered, quietly, though he had some difficulty in keeping his temper, for he was by nature hot-headed, hasty, and adventurous.

Our position as guests alone prevented his quarrelling openly with this Frenchman.

We had come in search of adventure to this little town of Gallicia, which lay at the foot of one of the Carpathian range of mountains. Dick was some years younger than I, and I had some difficulty to keep him from running into all sorts of dangers. We had spent the past week in shooting on the preserves of our host, who possessed a magnificent property on the side of the mountain, which estate was bordered by an immense forest of oak, beech, and chestnut, full of all kinds of game.

"I have one in my preserves," said he, "now. My keeper could show you where to find him, if you feel disposed to look him up. He never leaves these parts."

"One!" said Dick. "I have despatched more than fifty in my life. To-morrow morning I will add yours to the list."

This was received with another burst of laughter.

"I will bet you five pounds you won't do anything of the kind," said M. Allarde.

"Agreed," said Dick, eagerly.

When I, beginning to be afraid he was going too far, changed the conversation.

Soon after midnight—perhaps not quite steadily—we went up to bed, in a room which we occupied together. From a dreamless sleep I was aroused by a slight noise, ere it was quite light. I started into a sitting posture, and discovered that it was caused by Dick, who was dressing himself.

"What's up?" I asked, as soon as I was sufficiently awake to make out what he was doing.

"I am," he responded, shortly.

"Why, we haven't been in bed more than half an hour yet," I grumbled, and lay down again—asking, before settling myself to go to sleep once more, "Where are you going?"

"To win my wager."

"What wager?"

"Didn't I swear I would kill that boar this morning?"

"Pooh, Dick, it was only a joke! You are never going to be such a fool?"

"I mean to keep my word," he said, determinedly.

And, as nothing I could say had the slightest effect, I got up too, dressed, and followed him downstairs. As we passed through the hall, he took down a boar spear which hung there, and I provided myself with my gun. We then sought the keeper, whom we had some difficulty in waking. This man was a hardy mountaineer, who could climb like a goat; but he was not at all disposed to accompany us at this unearthly hour, and growled about it at first. He then tried his best to dissuade my brother from his rash project; but of course in vain.

"I will allow you," said Dick to me, "to come with me as far as the boar's retreat with your guns, if you like; but you must give me your word not to fire, except it be to defend yourselves. Then, when I have found him, you can go wherever you please, and leave me to tackle him. When I have despatched him, I will sound this horn to call you back."

I promised, inwardly resolving not to leave him, for I knew that without that promise he would have objected to my going.

"But the boar will not wait for you to attack him," said the guide, while he fastened on his sandals by the long straps which he wore crossed round his sinewy legs.

On the whole, it did not seem probable that, unprovided with dogs as we were, we should succeed in surprising the wild boar in his lair. However, *it had been done*, and Dick was determined.

It was a good walk, or rather climb, and would have been very enjoyable under different circumstances. As it was, I could think of nothing but the danger we were about to run into, and hope that my brother would not be injured. A boar is a very formidable antagonist, and Dick had nothing but his spear; while the guide and I carried only our guns, loaded, and had brought no materials for re-loading. Dick, however, had no such thoughts in his mind. Every few minutes he gave vent to exclamations such as "What a delicious morning!" "What a scene for an artist!" and so on.

As we emerged from the trees into a more open space, he came to a standstill, and looked round. Beneath us lay the little town, all asleep as yet, the houses dotted here and there, half hidden by trees; while above us towered the craggy slope, belted with forest for a considerable height, barren and rugged towards the top.

"Oh, isn't this glorious?" he exclaimed. "Fred, Fred, what a hard, insensible fellow you are! How can you tramp on with your eyes on the ground, with such a beautiful piece of the earth before you? Do be a little enthusiastic for once in your life. Look at that high mountain over to the west, with the snow on its summit; isn't it dazzling? Isn't it grand? What idiots men are to lie in bed and snore when the world is at its best!"

"I wish I were in bed, and you too," was my reply to this effusion; and Dick gave a half-vexed laugh.

"Oh, come along! It's no use talking to you. I

believe there never was such an unromantic fellow born."

We walked on again, in silence for some time, and just before six we reached the place the animal was said to haunt. We then advanced very cautiously, the keeper first, Dick next, and I bringing up the rear, holding our breath, walking gingerly, and trying to avoid making the leaves crackle under our feet.

Suddenly the keeper turned, and laid his finger on his lips as a sign to us that we must be near the object of our quest. As he did so, there was a sudden rush, an angry grunt, and our guide lay full length on the ground motionless; while I found myself, how I know not, raised for a minute on the back of the creature, and the next clinging to the forked branch of an oak, some feet from the ground. Fortunately, I did not drop my gun.

Meanwhile, Dick, more nimble and more on the alert than we had been, had leapt on one side when the rush came, and he now sprang forward to plunge his weapon under the boar's right shoulder.

However, the division was not equal. The point of the lance might snap off, and the keeper was in danger of being ripped and seriously hurt. So, with a quick movement, I hoisted myself up on the branch and fired both barrels. All this had not occupied a minute. But the boar was not dead by any means, in spite of my two shots and the repeated thrusts of Dick's lance. He was enraged by the pain, and his fury was directed against my brother. The adventure was very near having a fatal termination, and certainly would have done so had not the keeper, recovering sufficiently to see how matters stood, raised himself and sent two balls into the animal's skull, with the result that he gave two or three squeals, rolled over, and lay still.

Dick was very white now that the danger was over; and I, having regained *terra firma*, offered him a little flask of brandy, which some prophetic instinct had induced me to slip into my pocket before we started. He took a good pull, and then, looking at me, burst out laughing.

"Why, Fred, old chap, you look as solemn as if the brute had done for us instead of we for it. You came off best, getting up there in the tree out of the way. Are you hurt, my man?" he asked in a different tone, as he became aware that the keeper was still sitting on the ground, staring rather vacantly before him. "Here, have some brandy."

This treatment soon put him right again.

"It was my head," he said, in answer to our inquiries. "All my senses were knocked out of it for a few minutes."

Dick said no more then; but he afterwards thanked the man very substantially for his timely aid.

At eight a cart conveyed our trophy to the château, all the villagers staring in wide-eyed wonder as we passed through the street. The boar weighed 320 lbs. Dick has the skin still.

As we entered the château, who should we meet in the hall but M. Allarde. He at once took in everything at a glance, and coming forward, held out his hand to Dick.

"Sir," he said, "I respect you. You are altogether a brave man. But you English are a wonder!"

Brown the Bettor.

"I NEVER knew such a fellow as you are to win, Brown," said a fellow-officer to Captain Brown of the Lancers. "It's of no use to bet with you; one might just as well give you the money out and out. It's sheer luck."

"It's nothing of the kind, my dear fellow," said the captain, "but a matter of calculation."

"Ah, well," said the other, "I don't calculate; do you, colonel?"

"No," said the colonel, "I only bet."

"By the way, colonel," said the captain, "as this is my last night, I'll make a wager with you."

"Good," said the colonel, "I'll take you. By the way, you'll find your new colonel a Tartar. Rollins is not such an easy-going fellow as you've found me. What do you think of my wager?" he continued, to the other officers of the mess.

"Oh," cried first one and then another, "I'll take him at that—an even pony, Brown."

"Done—I'll take you."

"And I."

"Done."

"And I."

"Done—done—done—done—done."

Captain Brown entered his bets in his book, and then the wine was passed round, all talk of wagers was set aside, and a most convivial evening was spent, by way of farewell to one of the most popular officers in the regiment, who had exchanged into the Hussars for the sake of going on foreign service.

A few days after, and Captain Brown had joined his new regiment, where he was most cordially received; and as a dinner had been given at his departure from the old, he had come with so good a series of friendly recommendations to the new regiment, that a little banquet was got up in his honour.

Now, Brown was a modest man, and he never aired his successes. In fact, though he intended to line his pockets at the expense of his new comrades, he wished to do it quietly, and as opportunity served. In fact, he would have been glad if nothing had been said about his betting propensities; but as the evening went on, and the conversation grew more free, the colonel began, in a bantering strain, to touch upon the reputation Captain Brown had obtained, and did not scruple to keep up a running fire of comment.

"Button up your pockets, gentlemen," he said, at last, after a variety of pointed allusions—"no betting with our new captain. I hear he wins every wager he lays."

"Then I shall go to him for tips," said one.

"Mind he don't have you," chuckled the colonel. "I'm told he never fails to win."

"But that's impossible," said one.

"I don't believe it," said another.

"I tell you it's a fact," said the colonel; "he wins every bet."

And so the conversation went on, every effort being good-humouredly made to draw Brown out; but for some time he refused to be drawn, but sat calmly thinking, smoking, with his eyes half closed, till he could keep quiet no longer; for the colonel, dropping the indirect, assumed the direct attack.

"I say, Brown, my dear fellow," he began, "tell us—is it true? They say you win every bet you make."

"Yes, colonel," said the captain, smiling, "it is quite true."

"Nonsense!" chorused a dozen voices.

"It isn't nonsense," said the colonel, "for I'm told on very good authority—namely, his old colonel, a dear friend of mine—that it is true. He told me when it was first settled that Brown was to exchange; and now, you hear, he attests it himself."

"Proof, proof!" cried the others.

"Ah!" said the colonel, "proof. Come, Brown, how is it you manage it? You won't mind telling, I suppose?"

"Oh, dear no," said Brown, smiling—"I don't mind telling. You see, the fact is I am a physiognomist."

"A physiognomist?"

"Yes, I study the countenance of the man I bet with, and know beforehand how matters will be. It may seem unfair, but it is my power, and I think I have a right to use it."

"Well, that's curious," said the colonel; "but do you mean to tell me that you can read a man's face, and tell what he is thinking?"

"I did not say that," said the captain, "but I can read a man's face enough for the purposes of a wager."

"You can read mine, then?" said the colonel, chuckling.

"Oh, yes," was the calm reply.

And the officers round the table grew interested.

"What can you read there, then?"

Captain Brown looked at him intently for a few moments, and then said—

"Well, for one thing, I can read that the old wound on your back has broken out afresh."

"Nonsense," roared the colonel, "I never had a wound on my back."

"Indeed?" said the captain, smiling. "But, there, let it pass."

"No, confound it, sir!" cried Colonel Rollins, showing by his choleric visage that he really was the Tartar described, "I won't let it rest. I tell you I never had a wound on my back, though I can show four where I *faced* the enemy."

The younger officers exchanged glances, and the colonel saw it, and it made him more angry.

"You do not like the subject touched," said Captain Brown, gravely—"a retreat—a duel; then we will pass it over. I beg your pardon for touching so tender a place."

"But, confound it all, sir!" roared the colonel, "I have no wound on my back to break out afresh."

The captain smiled.

"Come, then," said the colonel, fighting hard to keep down his anger. "You are a betting man. I'll bet you—I'll bet you two ten-pound notes to one that I have not got a wound, nor yet even the scar of a wound—even a scratch—upon my back. Will you bet?"

"With pleasure, if it pleases you, colonel."

"Damme, sir, it does please me! I want this cleared up. A wound on my back! Damme, sir, I

never turned my back to the enemy in my life. Now, sir, will you bet?"

"I will," said the captain, speaking reluctantly, and as if he were forced into it; while the colonel was evidently growing purple from suppressed rage.

"Good, then," said the colonel; "twenty pounds to ten. The mess here are witnesses. Smith, lock that door."

A young cornet obeyed; and, heated by wine, the colonel, in his rage and desire to prove his new captain to be what he mentally called a humbug, proceeded to divest himself of all his upper garments, revealing several bullet scars and sword cuts upon his chest and arms; but there was not the vestige of a scratch upon his back.

"Come, look all of you," cried the colonel—"I'm not ashamed. You'll find no old wound upon my back."

One and all inspected the old gentleman, and declared that there was no scar.

"Not a trace," they exclaimed.

"Now, Captain Brown," said the colonel, "perhaps you will come and look, sir, and satisfy yourself."

"I'll take the word of these gentlemen, colonel," said Brown.

"No, no, sir. You would not believe me, so I don't see why you should them."

"But I am satisfied, indeed," said Brown. "I have lost. I was mistaken."

"Humph! I'm glad of that," said the colonel, snatching himself back into his clothes, and at last buttoning up his coat. "I'm afraid, sir, you could not read my countenance."

"No, sir, I confess I could not; I am beaten. There are your ten pounds."

The colonel chuckled and looked delighted as he pocketed the money; for this, and the feeling that he had been too much for his new captain, put him in the best of humours. So jolly was he that he patted Brown affectionately on the back when they parted.

"You couldn't read me, my lad, eh? No, no; rather too deep for you, eh—eh?"

"Much too deep, colonel. I was beaten," said Brown.

And from that day, for a whole fortnight, Brown's glory as a bettor was under eclipse. At the end of that fortnight there was a change.

The reason was this:—

Colonel Rollins was so delighted at having, as he said, beaten the betting man, that he wrote to his friend the colonel of the Lancers regiment.

"DEAR WARREN—That was all gammon about Brown's luck at betting. He said he could read people's faces, and so won in that way; and, hang me, if the first night he was here he didn't bet me that I had a re-opened wound on my back. I bet him, of course—two to one—proved to him that I had not, and pocketed his ten pounds. It will be a lesson for him. He's a nice fellow, though, and we all like him very much.—Yours, very truly,

"JOHN ROLLINS."

An answer came back in the course of a post or two.

"DEAR ROLLINS—Glad you like Brown. Hang him! we don't. He has bitten us too often, and has just bitten us again. Confound him! The night before he left us, I was talking about what a sharp officer you were—quite a Tartar—and he laid a wager with me that was taken, too, by half the officers in the mess, that he'd do as he liked with you; in fact, that the very first time you dined together, he'd make you take off your shirt before the whole mess, and that you would write and tell me. It seems he has done it, and we've all got to pay. You may keep Brown. We don't want him back.—Faithfully yours,
"FRANK WARREN."

"Well," exclaimed the colonel, "of all the tricks—But, hang it all, how dare they say I was a Tartar!"

Poisoned in Despair.

JOHN GRIMJOHN was a bit of a wag in his way, and after fifty years' experience gained behind the counter of a large refreshment saloon, he could pretty well tell what a man meant by his looks.

He was sitting very quietly one day, reading his daily paper, and trying to understand how it was that the Turks and the Russians were both getting the best of it, when a seedy-looking individual entered the place.

"Glass of bitter," said the stranger, heaving a deep sigh, and staring hard at John, as he took down a clear glass, and drew a foaming draught of the amber liquid, which he placed clear and sparkling before the visitor.

"Here are my last two coppers," said the stranger, with a heavy sigh, as he laid them on the counter for John to rake them into the till.

"The last twopence," said the man again, as he laid his hand upon the stem of the glass, staring hard the while at John, as if he expected the twopence to be refunded.

"If I had come down to twopence," said John to himself, "I don't think I should spend it in beer. I might in tobacco; but I think it would go in bread."

He did not speak, however, but sat down, and took up his paper, and began reading again. There was no one in the place, so the stranger went on again.

"My last twopence," he said, more loudly. "When I have swallowed this beer, I shall be a beggar and an outcast."

"With a glass of beer inside him," said John, sententiously.

"Eh?"

"With a glass of beer inside him," said John, quietly.

"Yes, to be sure," said the stranger; "but the last glass—the last. The world has never given me a chance; the world rejects—scorns—does not care for me. I will poison myself."

John rustled his paper, and went on reading.

"I repeat," said the stranger, "I will poison myself—mix a deadly drug with this last glass, and be free of the world."

John re-turned his paper, gave it a punch in the

middle, got it folded conveniently, and went on reading.

"I say," continued the stranger, loudly, "I will poison myself where I stand, and fall here dead, as a warning to a brutal and unfeeling world."

John went on spelling through his paper without moving a muscle.

"Here, then, is an end of my worthless self," said the stranger, very deliberately taking a small packet from an envelope—a packet that looked like the white powder that goes with the blue under the name of seidlitz; and this he opened very deliberately, and emptied it into the beer, where, for the most part, it lay on the froth.

John looked up, saw what he was doing, and the state of affairs—how the white powder emptied out of the paper refused to mix with the beer.

"Like a spoon?" he said, getting up and handing one.

"A spoon? Yes," said the stranger, with a mocking laugh that would have been worth ten shillings a night at the Surrey Theatre.

As he spoke, he took the spoon, stirred the liquor, and threw the little piece of metal down, while John resumed his place and went on reading.

"Farewell, cold world, farewell!" said the stranger. "They may bury me where they will. I might have been great; but now—ah, now, poor, neglected one!—they may bury me in sunshine or in shadow, I care me not."

He took up the glass, drained it to the last drop, and then, standing the glass down, held on by the counter, and heaved a tremendous sigh—one which sounded like satisfaction at the goodness of the bitter beer.

As for John, he went on reading as coolly as could be, his lips moving as though he were spelling over the big words.

The man uttered a roar, and moved towards the entrance; but, unable to contain his annoyance, he turned sharply round, and came back.

"Villainous type of a cold and heartless world," he said, addressing John Grimjohn, "you have taken my last coin; and yet you sit there, and see me poison myself, without stretching out a hand to save—without saying a word."

"Have you taken poison?"

"I have—I have," groaned the stranger.

"Have you really? Was that poison in the paper?" said John, coolly.

"Yes; I have just swallowed a fatal dose of arsenic—one of the most dangerous of our poisons."

"Ah, I know what arsenic is," said John, coolly.

"And I have taken enough to kill six men," groaned the stranger, in a hollow voice.

"Well, that was wasteful," said John, grimly. "You might have bought enough for one, and spent the balance on beer."

"Enough for six—enough for six," said the stranger, rolling his eyes, and speaking in tragic tones.

"Good," said John, opening a flap in the counter. "Come in here."

He caught the stranger by the collar, drew him in behind the counter, through the bar parlour, and into a kind of store behind, where there was a large cupboard.

"No one saw you come in," said John, quietly, "and no one saw you take the poison?"

"Only you—only you," said the man, faintly. "A doctor—a doctor!"

And he was about to fling himself into a chair; but John held him up, and thrust him into the big closet.

"Doctor, eh? Oh, yes, my boy, you shall have a doctor—half a dozen of 'em. They'll hold a fine revel round your corpus."

"Wh—wh—what do you mean?" gasped the stranger, as John thrust him back, and held the door ready to clap to.

"I mean I'm glad you took arsenic," said John.

"Wh—wh—why, you unfeeling wretch?"

"Because it leaves the body so nice and limp and soft. The doctors like it so."

"What do you mean?" faltered the poisoned man.

"Mean?" said John. "Why, that the doctors will give me ten pounds for a good, healthy, strong subject like you. I say, what a splendid lecture on anatomy that will be round you about the day after to-morrow?"

"Sell me—to the doctors!" groaned the horrified man.

"Of course; but not you—your body. You won't know anything about it, my lad; and nobody else, for no one saw you come in."

"Wretch!" roared the stranger.

But the word was cut in half by John banging to and locking the closet door.

"I say," he said, knocking at the panel.

"Yes—yes; let me out," cried the man, faintly.

"Just die as quickly as you can, there's a good fellow; and don't mind making a noise, if it eases your mind—no one can hear you."

The man began to kick and hammer at the door, and John walked up and down, smiling and rubbing his hands. Then he turned back to the bar, served a few customers, left the place in charge of a barman, and went to where the stranger was still hammering away at the door.

"Not dead yet?" John said, with his mouth to the keyhole.

"No—no—no! Let me out," groaned the man, "or I shall die."

"Well, I want you to die," said John, coolly.

"But it wasn't poison—only powdered chalk," groaned the prisoner. "Let me out—let me out!"

"You scoundrel!" cried John opening the door, collaring the stranger, and shaking him. "Do you mean to say that was only powdered chalk?"

"That was all, sir—that was all."

"Then you've robbed me of ten pounds that I should have got for your wretched carcase."

"I'll never do so no more, sir—I won't, 'pon my soul, I won't."

"Soul!" cried John, shaking and kicking him. "You haven't got a soul in your wretched, despicable body, or I'd shake it out. Now," he continued, opening a side door, "be off, and try and get some honest work to do, and leave off swindling. You're one of the sort of scoundrels who put soap in your mouths to make froth, and then fall down, and humbug people with believing that you've got fits."

"Yes, sir—no, sir; pray let me go, sir," gasped the poor wretch.

And at last, John set him at liberty, sending him flying a little more readily by giving him a sharp kick with his anything but light boot.

"I saw him again a week after," said John, "and he was carrying a pair of sandwich boards. I knew that he was only trying it on, and that the poisoning was a dodge. But I don't think he'll ever try to poison himself any more. At least," he added, after a pause, and his face puckered up with a jovial smile—"not with chalk."

The Use of Slang.

AMERICAN boys are said to be growing slangy. In fact, the other day, a forward boy of fourteen came home from school, and said to his mother—

"Is dinner ready?"

"Not yet, my dear," said mamma.

"Then why, in the n. o. g." (name of goodness), "isn't it?"

"What do you mean, Tom?" said mamma, staring.

"Mean?" said the boy—"why, that you'd better l. s." (look sharp).

Mamma stared at the hopeful youth very hard, and said nothing; but when his father came home to dinner, she quietly informed him that Master Tommy was picking up slang.

"Slang, eh? Picking up slang, is he? Oh, very well—I'll have a talk to him. Tom," he said, calling the boy, "where did you go last night?"

"Only down to the c. f. for a little while."

"Only down to the c. f., eh? Well, and what's the c. f.?"

"Cricket field, pa."

"Oh," said his father, looking at him from one corner of his eyes. "Pray, what's that you've got in your pocket?"

"Only an m. p., pa."

"Only an m. p., eh? So you carry members of Parliament about with you, eh?"

"No, no," said the boy, laughing. "M. p., meerschaum pipe. I have g. t. h." (got the habit) "of abbreviating my words."

"So I see," said his father, quietly—"strong. Very well, my son," he continued, rising, "you will p. a. m. to the back bedroom."

"What say, pa?" said the boy.

"You will p. a. m.—please accompany me—to the back bedroom."

They went; and there, Master Tom being denuded of his jacket, his father remonstrated with him by means of a penny cane, with the result that Tom exercised a vast amount of ingenuity in the way in which he displayed his elasticity, bounding about in all directions with a vigour that made his father smile.

When the remonstrance had ceased, Tom's father said to him—

"Now, sir, d. l. m." (don't let me) "hear any more of your slang, nor yet catch you smoking again for seven years. Do you hear?"

"Y. f." (yes, father), said Tom.

"Oh!" he roared, as there was a fresh cut from the cane.

"I say, sir, don't let me hear any more of y. s." (your slang). "Don't you hear, sir?"

"Yes, father; not a. b. w." (another blessed word), sighed the boy, as, being left alone, he sat down to w. h. t. a. (wipe his tears away).

A Refractory Member.

IN a volume published recently there are a few interesting anecdotes connected with the British House of Commons. One is very amusing, as being characteristic of the solemn dignity attached to Parliament, and in these days of obstruction it may not be out of place.

Bellamy, the proprietor of the well-known coffee and chop-house attached to the House, was asked by an old friend at whose table he was dining what event within his recollection caused the most astonishment among the members of that august assembly.

When it was remembered that only a few months before the Prime Minister had been shot dead in the lobby by Bellingham, he was not a little surprised when Bellamy, after pausing profoundly for some minutes, said—

"There can be no question that the greatest astonishment ever created in the House of Commons was when Sir George Rose came into the House drunk one evening, and called upon Mr. Speaker for a comic song.

"The members were perfectly paralyzed with astonishment, most of them starting to their feet. As soon as the Speaker could collect his scattered senses, he ordered the sergeant-at-arms to take the honourable member into custody.

"Sir George Rose, who was a country member of great influence and wealth, was consequently brought up before the Speaker; but the wine he had drunk had made him pugnacious and obstinate, and when he was called upon by the sergeant-at-arms to beg the Speaker's pardon, he swore hard and fast he would beg no man's pardon, not even King George's, and certainly not that little chap's with the big wig.

"Sir George Rose was therefore committed to a room, called the lock-up of the House of Commons, to sleep off his debauch. Next day he was penitent and sober, begged the Speaker's pardon, was reprimanded, and discharged on payment of costs, which were very heavy."

An Ugly Customer.

A LONG-WAISTED lady, having a seductive smile and winning ways, called upon a shoemaker to convince him that he needed a metal hair-brush—a novelty just out, and in the hands of canvassers.

After she had had about five minutes' talk, he uncovered his bald head, and asked—

"Where is there anything to brush with it?"

"Then your wife could use it," she said.

"My wife is dead, poor soul."

"Then your daughters."

"I have no daughters, and the only son I have went crazy from brushing his hair too much."

"I believe this brush would help a new growth of hair on your scalp," she said, unwilling to let him off.

"Don't want any hair there," he replied; "I never was so happy as since I became bald-headed."

"Well, don't you ever brush your scalp?"

"Never; I have it sand-papered four times per year, and the rest of the time it must get along the best it can."

"I am in great need of money," she remarked, looking around the shop.

"So am I," he replied. "I haven't seen but ten shillings in the last two weeks."

"It would be almost an act of charity to buy of me," she pleaded.

"I never give to charity, madam; I haven't given a shilling to any one, or to any object, for the last thirty years."

"Your second wife might want the brush."

"I shall never marry again. I hate all women."

"Then you don't think you could use it?" she asked, as she rose up.

"Yes, I could take it, and brush my dog's ears clean back to his tail, and brush his tail clean over his nose; or I could make it into a shovel, or sell it to some sawmill, or repair my wheelbarrow with it; but I said 'No,' and I shall stick to it. I'm bald-headed, ill-tempered, sinful, malicious, and desperate; but I pride myself on keeping my word. And, madam, if metal hair-brushes, and bald-headed men, and female agents were as thick as buttons on a girl's dress, my voice would still cry, N-o-u-g-h—no!"

The Egotist's Note-book.

OF course it was not so named in honour of the member for Peterborough, but there is a Whalley Range, near Manchester. Why, then, does not Mr. Whalley go and range there, instead of airing his flights of fancy in the House of Commons? Once upon a time there was a boy who kept crying "Wolf, wolf!" when there was no wolf, and, inured to his cries, the neighbours paid no heed. Once upon a time, too, there was a sailor who, to be safe, used to thrust his head in the holes made by cannon-balls, arguing that the chances were enormous against a second ball coming in at the same hole. These little stories seem to me to give colour to the report that Mr. Whalley is a Jesuit in disguise; that, like the boy who cried "Wolf!" if he keeps shouting "Jesuit!" no one will believe there is any danger; and that he may pursue his machinations in peace, even in the House of Commons—into which, sailor-like, he has thrust his head, on the ground that the apparently most dangerous place is the safest after all.

The last new piece of idiocy—saving "Woa, Emma!" which every weak-minded individual repeats incongruously in the streets—is the song "We are going to have a baby." The following advertisement, culled from a daily paper, may be useful to those who truthfully sing:—

"Babies' outfit, new and complete. Any articles

from above sold cheap by lady owner. All beautifully made and trimmed. Address," &c.

Here is another advertisement, which may commend itself to those who look upon magazines as gold mines, and don't know how few of them pay:—

"Literary investment in a new monthly magazine in course of formation.—The Editor will be one of the most popular novelists of the day, whose name alone will command success. The special attention of authors and others desirous of embarking in such an undertaking is invited. Four contributors, each with a capital of £500, required."

Now, ladies, here is a delicious advertisement:—

"An artist (33), £200 a year and a little property, seeks to correspond with a lady (tolerable musician preferred) of simple tastes, and with about an equal income."

What is he like, this artist? Has he long hair, tucked behind his ears; thin, white hands; a velvet coat; and does he smell of tobacco—very strongly? Poor youth, to be driven to advertise for a wife!

The Foreign Office sent a circular to Consul Perceval, at Port Said, asking for information respecting the cattle-producing powers of the district. Consul Perceval replied that, as it was all desert, it produced neither oxen nor sheep. He might as well have added to his answer something from the old riddle, and told the propounders of the silly question that the inhabitants lived on the *sand which is there*, for they had mustered and bred.

Here is another saying from the meeting of the British Medical Association in Manchester the other day. Dr. Spencer Wells, in alluding to the hardships of the Vivisection Act, said "that it imposed arbitrary and unfair restrictions upon surgeons. Anybody," he said, "might slaughter oxen and sheep by thousands for human food, in any way he pleased. Oysters might be eaten alive." Surely! As if anybody, even the most rabid anti-vivisectionist, would eat a dead—Ugh! The idea is too horrible.

Oh, those printers' readers! A paper announces that "Miss Riddell's novel, *George Erith, of Fen-court*," has been dramatised, and also gives the name of the heroine as "Beyrl." Pleasant for Mrs. Riddell, the authoress of *George Geith*, who called her heroine "Beryl."

One of our best sayers of good things is "The Man about Town," of the *Sporting Gazette*. Here is one of his last:—

"I remember at a great City banquet, some nine or ten years ago, there was present as a guest a worthy pawnbroker, who had amassed an immense fortune, and had just done a very praiseworthy act of philanthropy, which had brought him into momentary prominence. It was intimated to him that his health would be drunk, and that he would be expected to respond to the toast. He of the three golden balls was no orator, and so sought counsel from a

friend as to the form which his acknowledgment of the toast should assume. His friend's advice was peremptory and brief.

"'Avoid shop as you would the devil—that's all the advice I have to give you.'

"Well, in due course the toast was proposed, received with acclamations, and the honoured pawnbroker rose, flushed and nervous, to reply. He began—

"'My Lord Mayor and gentlemen, I pledge you my honour—'

"There was a sudden titter heard, and the orator paused, and, in the pause, a voice was heard distinctly to say—

"'Shop, shop, sir. You ought to know better than to spout what doesn't belong to you.'

"Beads of perspiration stood upon the 'spouter's' face, and, after muttering a few inaudible words, he sat down, checkmated, as a wag observed, by a pawn."

A daily paper announces "Fresh meat from the River Plate." Good; nothing more suitable for an origin could be found than the River Dish, and that is not to be found on the map.

A Cambridge chemist has been fined for selling soda water that was not soda water; for the wisdom of the Bench decided that he was defrauding the public. This is absurd; for out of the millions of bottles of so-called soda water drunk annually, there is rarely a particle of soda. The soda water of commerce is simply plain water strongly charged with carbonic acid gas. The traces of copper and lead found in the chemist's mixture must have come from the machinery.

The *World* has been giving a caustic notice of the "hysterical" style of painting adopted by Mr. Burne Jones, and is tolerably hard upon its admirers. In the same number, however, it devotes an article to quite as hysterical an admiration of the habits and writings of the late Mr. Mortimer Collins. Of this gentleman's powers as author and poet I am not going to speak; but I do protest against the *World* declaring the verses "Under the Cliff by the Sea" to be the very perfection of a poem of the class. It was my misfortune to read the wretched jingle of rhymes years ago, when it appeared in a magazine; and anything more senselessly musical was scarcely ever penned. Mr. Charles Calverley gave the best criticism of that school of writing in his laughable lines ending "Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese." It is not difficult to write this style of *vers de société*—you get one good metrical line, and repeat it twice in every four-line stanza, so that the economy of brain-work is great. If I remember rightly—I quote entirely from memory—the perfection of poems begins as follows:—

"White-throated maiden, gay be thy carol,
Under the cliffs by the sea;
Plays the soft wind with thy dainty apparel,
Under the cliffs by the sea."

And so on, and so on. One verse will, I dare say, satisfy my readers, who will doubtless allow that the rude wind might as well have left the young lady's

garments alone. And in those days they wore crinolines!

A lady to her son-in-law, whose matrimonial speculation had not been a brilliant success:—

"What should you like for your birthday, Harry? Shall I get you a portrait of your wife?"

The brutal reply was:

"Well, I shouldn't at all mind the portrait, if you would only take back the original."

Two Frenchmen, who dabbled a little on the Bourse, were discussing the prospects of the war:—

"Who knows," remarked one of them, with an air of profound sagacity, "whether the war will be localized, or whether the Prussians —"

"The Prussians!" replied the other, interrupting him—"they could not interfere. They would have to fight us."

"But suppose they did interfere?"

"Then I should at once send in a contract to supply our brave infantry with shoes."

A very neat definition of the word "suspicion" was that given by a jealous husband:—"A suspicion is a feeling that impels you to try and find out something which you don't wish to know."

A card-sharper, going down to Ascot in a first-class carriage, produced a pack of cards, and asked one of the gentlemen in the compartment to join him in a game or two.

"No, thanks, I don't care about it. Besides, I'm very superstitious. Unless I begin to win at once, I get melancholy."

"Never mind; let us try a game or two."

And the sharper negligently opened a well-filled purse.

Two games were played, and, strangely enough, they were both won by the gentleman. Heavier stakes were then proposed by the sharper; but the gentleman said, with a yawn, that he did not care for any more play, and the sharper, who dared not complain, was completely done.

An exceedingly beautiful lady engaged as her gardener a man who was dreadfully hump-backed.

At the end of six months the gardener, without assigning any reason, intimated his wish to leave at once.

The lady questioned him upon the subject, and this is the conversation that ensued:—

"I'm sorry to be obliged to leave, ma'am; but I cannot remain longer in a house where the simple fact of my presence causes so much scandal."

"How so?" inquired the lady.

"Why, ma'am, they have dared to say that I am—"

"What?"

"In love with you, ma'am!"

An ingenious young gentleman has hit upon the remarkable discovery that the four letters composing the word "news" indicate severally the north, east, west, and south. He has since offered his services to the London School Board, to assist in the great work of spelling reform.

A French "gentleman," calling himself Viscount Fontenay, has been robbing a Glasgow jeweller by means of the stalest old trick known to a certain class of deceivers: valuable jewellery is to be sent into an hotel, where, as in this case, the viscount receives them of the assistant, and takes them into the next room to show to a lady. This he does by walking out at another door, leaving the unfortunate dupe to wait till he is tired, and then find out the trick.

Messrs. Macniven Brothers, of Cannon-street, have introduced a new washstand screen, which possesses the following advantages:—It is made to imitate the best light blue, green, buff, or white marble; is readily cleaned with an ordinary sponge and water; will last for years with careful treatment; and is easily fixed or removed.

"Vat is deece?" said a French gentleman at Wimbledon the other day, as a portion of the London Scottish were passing, and a general breaking-up of the camp was visible.

"It is the close of the Wimbledon meeting," said a friend who played cicerone.

"Aha! Ze clothes of ze meeting. If ze meeting had some more clothes it would be much as bettaire," said monsieur, who stared a little harder at the London Scottish, and nodded his head.

The Colorado beetle is just now the sensation of the day, so a description of the expected immigrant, taken from models, will not be out of place. The beetle is represented on a potato leaf: First, the eggs, laid in two straight parallel rows underneath the leaf of the young potato plant. These eggs are of a light yellow, are of about the size of a large pin's head, and could not possibly be mistaken by any one who, having once seen the model, should look over patches of growing potatoes. The larvæ are shown in three stages of development. At three days old the insect is very much like a small ladybird, but longer in shape, and pointed towards the tail. Its body is a dark red, with a black head. At fourteen days old the body is longer in shape and more pointed at the tail. The head, which is separated from the rest of the body by a black line, is now of the same dull red as the wing cases. At three weeks old the colour is much paler, the black line behind the head is much broader, the head itself is much lighter in colour, but tipped with black. The full-sized beetle loses all its redness, and the wing cases are striped with black stripes, ten in number, on a pale yellow ground. It is in this stage about the size of a large bluebottle fly. The chrysalis is yellowish in colour and unshapen, something like a drop of yellow sealing-wax which may have fallen on the leaf without spreading. The insect probably passes the winter in the chrysalis form, lying in the ground, where its colour and half-round shape would make it readily discoverable in the mould.

A young spendthrift baronet recently dismissed one of his servants who had had the insolence to ask for the arrears of his wages.

On being subsequently applied to for a character, he sent the following:—"James Watson was in my service four years. I discharged him, not for incapacity, for he was an excellent valet, but because

of his aptitude for finance, a character in which he was altogether unbearable."

The length of his nose never affects a man of spirit. Here, however, is a good story. A well-known Parisian journalist has a nasal organ of most imposing appearance. The other day he was talking with a friend, who was pressing upon him an argument into which he did not care to enter. Irritated at length by his inattention, his friend suddenly broke out—

"Come, B., I want to talk to you. Sit down, and put your nose on your knees, and let us speak seriously."

A prudent and well-disposed member of the Society of Friends once gave the following friendly advice:—

"John," said he, "I hear thou art going to be married."

"Yes," replied John, "I am."

"Well," replied the man of drab, "I have one little piece of advice to give thee, and that is—never marry a woman worth more than thou art. When I married my wife, I was worth fifty shillings, and she was worth sixty-two; and whenever any difference has occurred between us since, she has always thrown up the odd shillings."

Lamartine, being at the Hotel de Ville, received the announcement that a deputation of Vesuviennes demanded an interview. These women in type and brutality strongly resembled the famous fishwomen of the first Revolution. The doors of his study were thrown open, and the apartment was presently filled by these fierce-looking dames, whose dishevelled locks and uncouth garb presented anything but an attractive spectacle.

M. de Lamartine bowed, and begged to know whether he could be of any service to his visitors.

"Citizen," replied the foremost among them, standing with arms akimbo in front of her comrades, "the Vesuviennes have resolved to send you a deputation to express their admiration of your conduct. There are fifty of us; and in the name of all the Vesuviennes, we, fifty in number, have come to kiss you."

The poet gave one glance at the forest of unkempt hair and the rubicund cheeks of the fifty unwashed Venuses, and thus replied—

"Citoyennes, I thank you for the sentiments you inspire me with; but allow me to remark that patriots of your stamp are more than women—they are men. Men do not embrace each other. We shake hands."

And thus, by a stroke of the most subtle flattery, did the author of the "Meditations" escape the fifty kisses of the Megæras of the Revolution of '48.

I do not see what bachelors have done to deserve so much attention, and probably they would not have got it now, were it not that what is good for a bachelor is equally good for a young married couple, a small family, or a home where a fire is voted a nuisance in hot weather. These remarks are drawn forth by the ingenious little portable stove just brought out and patented by Messrs. King and Browne, of Wigmore-street, who, by means of a suitable lamp

which burns mineral oil with perfect safety, have contrived a little stove which, from one's own experience, will do anything: boil kettle, saucepan, or stew on the top, while inside it roasts, toasts, or broils in a manner that is admirable. A chicken, a steak, or a small joint cooked in these stoves comes out brown, juicy, tender, and possessed of a flavour that is not known in ordinary cooking; and to achieve this the stove is lit in an instant, and costs one halfpenny per hour. The stove has won a prize medal, and most deservedly, for it is one of the most ingenious and useful little contrivances of the century, and should be in every house. I may add that the first cost is from 13s. to 25s., according to size; and no setting is needed, inasmuch as the stove can be placed upon the table.

There is a story well worth reading, called "That Lass o' Lowrie's," in which the heroine, after saving life in a colliery accident, indignantly refuses the fifty pounds offered to her, bidding those who offer it distribute the money amongst the fatherless and the widows. This is a striking contrast to the behaviour of the Rhondda Valley people, who seem to like the rewards. But then, perhaps, that lass o' Lowrie's was a fool.

A gentleman writes to one of the papers:—"My attention was attracted to a knot of men who had just left the train, and were standing near a first-class carriage, bidding farewell to some one inside. As the train moved out of the station, one of the group either ran along the platform or rode on the footboard. The train had attained a moderate speed, when he appeared to slip, and I saw him fall between the train and the platform, most of the carriages passing over him, and, of course, cutting him to pieces. As I was one of the witnesses of this fearful event, some of my neighbours have urged me to write, protesting earnestly against the horrible man-trap formed by the space left between the carriage and platform." How long is this protesting to go on? Passengers and railway servants are butchered to a fearful extent, and still Government does not interfere. Until some great man—say Mr. Parnell or Mr. Biggar—has been killed, it is to be feared that these railway atrocities will continue.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyló-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER II.—SAMPSON THE STRONG.

WHEN Sampson Elton married Mrs. Henderson some half-score years before, he soon showed that he was in full authority at the mill, and the men there soon found it out—ay, and those who worked on the little farm too. He did not like having those for servants who had been, to a certain extent, his fellow workmen; so he began changing them by degrees, and he did it not in a quiet, business-like manner, but by shabby, underhanded means, so as to rid himself of the onus of having discharged the men. He did it by cruel, bitter tyranny—not your baronial tyranny of the middle ages, but in a Jerry Sneak, slow-torturing, modern style—by harsh treatment, fault-finding, and various cunning devices. He would grumble and find fault without reason; look at all the men as if they were thieves, carrying an air of suspicion about with him, and occasionally bring up some false accusation; and altogether would lead them such a life, that one by one they left him in disgust, and fresh faces—faces of men who had not known the master in his humbler capacity of foreman—soon filled the vacancies. Sampson used to call it fighting the Philistines, and setting the men to make bricks without straw; and, truth to say, it is surprising what hard and bitter bondage the lives of workmen may be made by a bad master, without having recourse to the rod of the taskmaster and beating with stripes.

But there was one man of whom Sampson could not get rid, though he liked him least of all—for he was a staunch friend of Frank's; and though a quiet, almost morose man, he was always ready to do anything for the young master. He would dig him worms, make him fishing-rods or boats, cut him sticks, fashion cricket bats—in fact, do anything in reason, and do it ingeniously and well. Mark Woodston had been an old and valued servant of Mr. Henderson; the fidelity he had shown towards the father was at his death transferred to the son; and many a time when the new master was speaking harshly to Frank, Woodston's eyes would flash, and if he had dared, he would have boldly taken the youth's part against his oppressor.

Now, in spite of all Sampson's ill-usage, Mark would not go. Many a time he had been made to wince with abuse, but the man bore every taunt and ill-humoured remark with the greatest of forbearance and patience. Mark was a better-class labourer, and having known Frank from a child, he had formed a strong attachment to the boy, as well as to Mrs. Elton, and he soon showed by his actions that it would require something very strong indeed to drive him away from the old place. He lived at the off-hand farm house, where he had been accustomed in Mr. Henderson's time, to act more as foreman than labourer. But now he was so treated that it was hard work to bear the ill-usage, and often and often he would go home to his invalid wife with the veins in his forehead swelled out almost to bursting, and his countenance black with suppressed passion; but the sight of Frank or Mrs. Elton used somehow to act like oil upon the troubled

waters of his life, and he soon calmed down again, and went on as if nothing had happened, greatly to Sampson's surprise and disgust; for after a scene, the master would watch the tortured man, as he went off smarting with the pain of his wounds, and smile, and chuckle, and mutter to himself—

"He'll go after that."

But he did not; and months rolled on, while Frank and Stephen Vaughan took every opportunity that presented itself to get down to the little farm and go about with Mark, who had heard from Sampson times out of number that he was not worth his salt; but he plodded wearily on, as if with the stern determination not to leave his situation, and his master now began to see that if he wanted him to go, he must use very strong means indeed.

"Hooray!" cried Frank, one morning, during the midsummer holidays. "Hooray, Steve! haymaking—come on!"

And with a whoop and a run, the boys were off down in the pleasant meadow, through which, laughing, dimpling, and sparkling, ran the river—now winding and curving, now straight, now doubling back almost over the same ground; while on either side lay the long swathes of newly-cut grass, save where the brown scented hay was piled up.

"Come on!" cried Frank; "there's Mark, and he'll lend us the two little forks, and we'll have such a turn at the hay, and then a ride on the top of the waggon, for I heard *him* say they were going to carry to-day."

"But old Mildew won't let you," said Stephen Vaughan; "he'd soon stop that."

"But he's going to Edgeton market," cried Frank, "and won't be here. I say, Mark, where's the waggon—aint you going to carry to-day?"

"Not to-day, Master Frank," said Mark; "the hay's too green. You want a ride, I s'pose, and you'll have to wait till to-morrow."

"Hallo, here!" cried Sampson, appearing from behind the hedge; "where's the waggon, you sir? I said this hay was to be carried. What's the reason it isn't begun?"

"Wouldn't do to carry it to-day, sir," said Mark, respectfully; "it's too green yet."

"What?" said Sampson, savagely.

"It would heat and take fire, sir," said Mark; "it's quite damp yet."

"How dare you interfere with my orders, sir?" roared Sampson. "Be off out of the field, you idle vagabond, and get the team here directly. A pretty thing, indeed, that one can't do as one likes on one's own land."

Mark made some unlucky reply, of which all that Sampson caught was the pith—namely, that old master would not have been so foolish; when, enraged at being opposed before his other men, and at seeing Frank and Stephen tittering, he allowed his passion to get the better of his judgment, and raising the thistle-spud he held in his hand, he struck Mark a heavy blow across the forehead.

The man staggered and fell, as the blood spurted from his left temple. He rose, however, in a moment, and wiped the blood from his face, turned towards Sampson, and was about to shake his

bloody fist at him, but he caught sight of Frank, and stopped in the act—ran up to the boy, grasped his hand for a moment, and then hurried out of the field.

The boys had no hay-making that day, for they made the best of their way down to the Hall, glad to be beyond the reach of the miller; and Stephen soon related the history of the morning's adventure to the squire; while before many more days had passed, Sampson Elton was gazing very ruefully at his burning haystack, which was a very large one; and the worst of it was, he had put off insuring it till the next market-day.

"I tell you what it is," said Sampson, at breakfast next morning, "that scoundrel, Woodston, set the stack on fire."

"Oh, my dear!" said Mrs. Elton, "you don't think so, do you?"

"Yes I do," said Sampson; "he did it out of spite."

"No, he didn't," said Frank. "It caught fire through being wet."

"How do you know, sir?" said Sampson, scowling.

"Why, Mark said it would; and I heard Squire Vaughan say so, too, when he was talking about it."

Sampson did not say anything, but he looked very vicious, and went about that day dropping hints to different neighbours that he thought Mark Woodston had fired the stack; but they only shook their heads, and said, "Pooh—pooh!" and when alone, and they discussed the matter, they said that any noodle would have known what would happen to the hay, stacking it in such a green state—it was sure to catch fire, sooner or later. And then, as a matter of course, when so grave a charge was brought against a man, the police thoroughly investigated the matter, and Inspector Raynard came over from Edgeton to see Sampson; but he only shook his head on hearing all about the case.

"You must excuse me, Mr. Elton," he said, "for I don't want to cast any reflections upon your farming, but there was no spite here, for the man warned you, and got himself discharged for trying to save your hay. I'll take him, if you like; but if you cannot prove all this, you will cut a bad figure, and you may take my word for it, the Edgeton magistrates won't listen to this unsupported charge in the face of such evidence as can be produced on the other side. And, besides, you'll excuse me, sir, there's something unpleasant about an assault, or blow, isn't there? At least, that's what I hear. Now, take my advice, sir: spread those ashes over your turnip-field, and look after your second hay crop."

"Humph!" said Sampson.

And then he frowned at Frank, who was eagerly listening to the conversation.

Poor Inspector Raynard! he had had a long walk that morning, along dirty lanes, and the sun was shining down upon the earth with a glare that made the atmosphere apparently quiver. Grass, leaves, sprays, everything drooped and looked faint with heat, not omitting the Edgeton officer, as he stood there, buttoned up to the chin in his tight uniform coat, talking to Sampson Elton, and wiping the perspiration from off his shining bald forehead. Glad

would he have been of a little refreshment, for he had tramped round fields and across meadows, to the off-hand farmstead, with Sampson, where he had seen everything in connection with the late fire. But now, as they stood in front of the cottage, the miller made no offer of either "bit or sup." Mr. Raynard had gone upon the wrong tack, and quite in opposition to Sampson Elton's desire, or else in the best parlour there was ready and waiting a capital dinner to which he would have been invited—to wit, a pair of ducklings, own brother and sister of the snowy-white, yellow-billed birds that sat preening their soft feathers by the mill-dam; the first fruits of the marrow-fats, scented most fragrantly with fresh mint—great green fellows that would roll over your tongue and melt in your mouth like a rainbow, as I once heard some one say—none of your hard, bitter, dry field-peas, but glorious, tender, juicy, marrowy marrow-fats, just the sort of peas that you never get in town. Then there was a raspberry and red-currant tart; yellow custard, made with milk from the soft, mousy-looking, dapply Alderney cows, that were whisking their tails amongst the rich grass in the meadows, and eggs laid by the great fat, dowdy-looking Dorking hens; a glass of capital sherry; and the whole to conclude with a piece of old Stilton cheese, a crusty, home-baked loaf, and a glass of foaming, sparkling, amber-hued, home-brewed ale—for Sampson did not believe in desserts; and all this spread on the whitest of white damask cloths, in a cool, shady room, on a hot day, when the open sash let in the sweet scent of the roses and climbing flowers around the window. But all was tabooed, as far as regarded the inspector, for Sampson said, very frigidly—

"Very well, Mr. Raynard, I suppose you know best."

And then he turned his back, and went into the house, directly after calling in Frank, who had lingered behind.

"Why, what a dreadfully inhospitable old scarecrow!" muttered the inspector, as he moved off. "To fetch me all this way upon his wild-geese chase, and then to serve me like that. Phew—how hot it is! I wish I hadn't walked. I'm as hollow as a drum."

But there was no help for it; so the representative of the law trudged down the dusty lane, where the chalky road dazzled his eyes, and where, down between the high hedges, there was not a breath of air stirring, while the sun's rays flashed up again from the parched earth.

"Confound it! how hungry I am, and how hot!" muttered Mr. Raynard; and then he unbuttoned his stiff uniform coat, and broke a twig from the hedge to keep away the flies, for they were buzzing about as if anxious to make a meal off the tired traveller. "Confound it all, and here's some one coming in a gig, and shuffling all the dust up, as if it wasn't bad enough already! No one ever comes your way when you want a lift. Phew! how I hate walking this weather!"

"Hillo-o-o-o-o!" sang out the driver of the gig, pulling short up, close to the inspector. "You here, eh? Who's been killed, or robbed, or assaulted, eh? What's the matter?" And then the speaker, who

was none other than Squire Vaughan, took off his white hat, nursed it upon his knees, and began to perform the same operation upon his head and face as the inspector was engaged in—namely, dabbing with a pocket-handkerchief. "Hot, isn't it?" he continued, without waiting for an answer to his previous questions. "Bound to say I know what you've been after: serving a summons on old Elton for breaking that poor fellow's head, eh?"

"Wrong, sir," said Mr. Raynard. "Mr. Elton thought the burning of that stack was a case of wilful firing; but I told him he was—"

"An old noodle," said Mr. Vaughan, interrupting the speaker. Then he shouted, "I haven't patience—"

And the rest of the sentence was lost, for, flicking his horse with the whip, he drove off; but before he had gone thirty yards, he pulled up short again, and, turning round in the chaise, he roared back—

"Hi, Raynard! did he bring out the wine?"

The inspector shook his head.

"The ale?"

Another negative movement from the inspector.

"What, nothing at all?"

Mr. Raynard gave his head such a fierce shake this time, that the buckle of his stiff stock screwed quite round to the front, and had to be tugged back to its proper position in the nape of his neck.

"Here, jump in, man," cried the squire; "just like the old curmudgeon. Look alive, for I'm hungry; it's past two o'clock, and I like early dinners. Incendiarism!" he continued, as the horse trotted off, and the dust flew in clouds behind them—"incendiarism! why, the man's mad! Any plough-boy could have told him different."

"You're quite right, sir," said the inspector; "but then duty's duty; and when we receive information of anything of this kind, why, we have to investigate it, and get to the truth somehow."

"From the bottom of a well, eh?" said the squire, trying to flick a fly off his horse's ear.

"Just so," said Mr. Raynard, smiling.

"I say," said the squire, "I suppose I should have had it the other day, if you law folks had known. I caught two scoundrels stealing the partridges' eggs. They had got about thirty, when I came up, and made them disgorge; and then I gave them such a thrashing with the riding whip I had in my hand. I was on the cob-pony, and one rascal nearly dragged me off two or three times over. How he roared for mercy! They neither of them dared run, for I had Cæsar, the big yard-dog, with me, and he would have pulled either of them down in a minute. They knew that well enough, and stood still and let me thrash them; and I did it well, too, for I don't like imprisonment, or anything of that sort. They danced about and broke all the eggs, though; but I don't think they'll come again—ha, ha, ha!" and the old gentleman laughed merrily.

About an hour afterwards, Mr. Raynard walked down to the Red Lion inn, at Waveley, in a much more comfortable state of mind and body. He seemed at peace with mankind in general, and only looked suspiciously at two tramps he encountered upon the road. But on passing the second man, so

great was the force of habit, that he was obliged to turn round, after walking a hundred yards or so, and call to the dust-powdered and ragged object to stop; but the poor fellow did not appear to hear the summons, for he shuffled on; so Mr. Raynard stood and watched him, till he had turned a corner in the lane, when he smiled benignly, and continued his walk to the Waveley Inn, where he engaged a conveyance, and drove comfortably home.

Tit-Bits from Helen's Babies.

THE programme for the afternoon was arranged to the satisfaction of every one. I gave the coachman, Mike, a dollar to harness the goat and teach the children to drive him; this left me free to drive off without being followed by two small figures and two pitiful howls.

I always believed a horse was infected by the spirit of his driver. My dear old four-footed military companions always seemed to perfectly comprehend my desires and intentions, and certainly my brother-in-law's horses entered into my own spirits on this particular afternoon. They stepped proudly, they arched their powerful necks handsomely, their feet seemed barely to touch the ground; yet they did not grow restive under the bit, nor were they frightened even at a hideous steam road-rolling machine which passed us. As I drove up to Mrs. Clarkson's door, I found that most of the boarders were on the piazza—the memories of ladies are usually good at times. Alice immediately appeared, composed, of course, but more radiant than ever.

"Why, where are the boys?" she exclaimed.

"I was afraid they might annoy your mother," I replied, "so I left them behind."

"Oh, mother hardly feels well enough to go to-day," said she; "she is lying down."

"Then we can pick up the boys on the road," said I.

For which remark my enchantress, already descending the steps, gave me a look which the ladies behind her would have given their best switches to have seen.

We drove off as decorously as if it were Sunday, and we were driving to church; we industriously pointed out to each other every handsome garden and tasteful residence we passed; we met other people driving, and conversed fluently upon their horses, carriages, and dress. But when we reached the edge of the town, and I turned into "Happy Valley," a road following the depressions and curves of a long, well-wooded valley, in which there was not a single straight line, I turned and looked into my darling's face. Her eyes met mine, and, although they were full of a happiness which I had never seen in them before, they filled with tears, and their dear owner dropped her head on my shoulder.

What we said on that long drive would not interest the reader.

But the hours flew rapidly, and I reluctantly turned the horses' heads homeward. We had left almost the whole of "Happy Valley" behind us, and were approaching residences again.

"Now we must be very proper," said Alice.

"Certainly," I replied; "here's a good-bye to happy nonsense for this afternoon."

Suddenly we heard a most unearthly, discordant shriek, which presently separated into two, each of which prolonged itself indefinitely. The horses started, and Alice—blessed be all frights, now, henceforth, and for evermore!—clung tightly to me. The sounds seemed to be approaching us, and were accompanied by a lively rattling noise, that seemed to be made by something wooden. Suddenly, as we approached a bend of the road, I saw my youngest nephew appear from some unknown space, describe a parabolic curve in the air, ricochet slightly from an earthy protuberance in the road, and make a final stop in the gutter. At the same time, there appeared from behind the bend, the goat, then the carriage dragging on one side, and lastly the boy Budge, grasping tightly the back of the carriage body, and howling frightfully. A direct collision between the carriage and a stone caused Budge to lose his hold, while the goat, after taking in the scene, trotted leisurely off, and disappeared in a road leading to the house of his late owner.

"Budge," I shouted, "stop that bawling, and come here. Where's Mike?"

"He—boo—hoo—went to—hoo—light his—boo—hoo—hoo—pipe, an' I just let the—boo—hoo—whip go against the goat, an' then he scat-tooded."

"Nashty old goat scaddooed," said Toddie, in corroboration.

"Well, walk right home, and tell Maggie to wash and dress you," said I.

"Oh, Harry," pleaded Alice, "after they've been in such danger! Come here to your own Aunt Alice, Budge dear—and you, too, Toddie—you know you said we could pick the boys up on the road, Harry. There, there—don't cry—let me wipe the ugly dirt off you, and kiss the face, and make it well."

"Alice," I protested, "don't let those dirty boys clamber all over you in that way."

"Silence, sir," said she, with mock dignity, "who gave me my lover, I should like to ask?"

So we drove up to the boarding-house with the air of people who had been devoting themselves to a couple of very disreputable children; and I drove swiftly away again, lest the children should dispel the illusion. We soon met Mike, running. The moment he recognized us, he shouted—

"Ah, ye little dhivils—beggin' yer pardon, Masther Harry, an' thankin' the Howly Mither that their good-for-nothin' little bones ain't broke to bits. Av they saw a hippypottymus hitched to Pharaoh's chariot, they'd think 'emselves jist the byes to take the bossin' av it, the spalpeens."

When they went to bed, I accompanied them by special invitation, but they showed no disposition to engage in the usual bedtime frolic and miniature pandemonium. Budge, when in bed, closed his eyes, folded his hands, and prayed—

"Dear Lord, bless papa an' mamma, an' Toddie, an' Uncle Harry, an' everybody else; yes, an' bless just lots that lovely, lovely lady that comforted me

after the goat was bad to me, an' let her comfort me lots of times, for Christ's sake, Amen."

And Toddie wriggled, twisted, breathed heavily, threw his head back, and prayed—

"Dee Lord, don't let dat old goat fro me into de gutter on my head aden, an' let Ucken Hawwy an' ze pitty lady be dere netst time I dets hurted."

The next morning would have struck terror to the heart of any one but a newly-accepted lover. Rain was falling fast, and in that steady, industrious manner which seemed to assert an intention to stick closely to business for the whole day.

I began at once to construct a story for their especial benefit; the scene was to be a country residence on a rainy day, and the actors two little boys, who should become uproariously jolly in spite of the weather. Like most people not used to story-making, my progress was not very rapid; in fact, I had got no farther than the plot indicated above, when an angry snarl came from the children's room.

"What's the matter, Budge?" I shouted, dressing myself as rapidly as possible.

"Ow—oo—ya—ng—um—boo—gaa," was the somewhat complicated response.

"What did you say, Budge?"

"Didn't say nuffin'."

"Oh, that's what I thought."

"Didn't thought."

"Budge, Budge, be good."

"Don't want to be good—ya—a—A!"

"Let's have some fun, Budge. Don't you want to frolic?"

"No—I don't think frolics is nice."

"Don't you want some candy, Budge?"

"No; you aint got no candy, I b'leeve."

"Well, you shan't have any if you don't stop being so cross."

The only reply to this was a mighty and audible rustling of the bedding in the boys' room, followed by a sound strongly resembling that caused by a slap; then came a prolonged wail, resembling that of an ungreased waggon wheel.

"What's the matter, Toddie?"

"Budge s'app'd me—ah—ah—h—h—h!"

"What made you slap your brother, Budge?"

"I didn't."

"You did!" screamed Toddie.

"I tell you I didn't! You're a naughty, bad boy to tell such lies, Toddie."

"What did you do, Budge?" I asked.

"Why—why—I was—I was turnin' over in bed, an' my hand was out, and it tumbled against to Toddie. That's what."

By this time I was dressed, and in the boys' room. Both my nephews were sitting up in bed, Budge looking as sullen as an old jail-bird, and Toddie with tears streaming all over his face.

"Boys," said I, "don't be angry with each other—it isn't right. What do you suppose the Lord thinks when he sees you so cross to each other?"

"He don't think nuffin'," said Budge; "you don't think He can look through a black sky like that, do you?"

"He can look anywhere, Budge; and He feels very unhappy when He sees little brothers angry with each other."

"Well, I feel unhappy too—I wish there wasn't never no old rain, nor nothin'."

"Then what would the plants and flowers do for a drink, and where would the rivers come from for you to go sailing on?"

"An' wawtoo to mate mud-pies," added Toddie. "You's a naughty boy, Budgie;" and here Toddie's tears began to flow afresh.

"I aint a bad boy, and I don't want no old rain nohow, and that's all about it. An' I don't want to get up, an' Maggie must bring me up my breakfast in bed."

"Boo—hoo—oo," wept Toddie, "wants my brepsup in bed too."

"Boys," said I, "now listen. You can't have any breakfast at all unless you are up and dressed by the time the bell rings. The rising-bell rang some time ago. Now dress like good boys, and you shall have some breakfast, and then you'll feel a great deal nicer; and then Uncle Harry will play with you, and tell you stories all day long."

Budge crept reluctantly out of bed and caught up one of his stockings, while Toddie began to cry.

"Toddie," I shouted, "stop that dreadful racket and dress yourself. What are you crying for?"

"Well, I feelsh bad."

"Well, dress yourself, and you'll feel better."

"Wantsh you to djesh me."

"Bring me your clothes, then—quick!"

Again the tears flowed copiously.

"Don't want to bring 'em," said Toddie.

"Then come here!" I shouted, dragging him across the room, and snatching up his tiny articles of apparel.

I had dressed no small children since I was rather a small boy myself, and Toddie's clothing confused me somewhat. I finally got something on him, when a contemptuous laugh from Budge interrupted me.

"How you goin' to put his shirt on under them things?" queried my oldest nephew.

"Budge," I retorted, "how are you going to get any breakfast if you don't put on something besides that stocking?"

The young man's countenance fell, and just then the breakfast-bell rang. Budge raised a blank face, hurried to the head of the stairs, and shouted—

"Maggie!"

"What is it, Budge?"

"Was—was that the risin'-bell or the breakfast-bell?"

"'Twas the breakfast bell."

There was a dead silence for a moment, and then Budge shouted—

"Well, we'll call that the risin'-bell. You can ring another bell for breakfast pretty soon when I get dressed."

Then this volunteer adjuster of household affairs came calmly back and commenced dressing in good earnest, while I laboured along with Toddie's wardrobe.

"Where's the button-hook, Budge?" said I.

"It's—I—oh—um—I put it—say, Tod, what did you do with the button-hook yesterday?"

"Didn't have no button-hook," asserted Toddie.

"Yes, you did: don't you 'member how we was

a-playin' draw 'teef, an' the doctor's dog had the toof-ache, and I was pullin' his teef with the button-hook, an' you was my little boy, an' I gived the toof-puller to you to hold for me? Where did you put it?"

"I'd no," replied Toddie, putting his hand in his pocket and bringing out a sickly-looking toad.

"Feel again," said I, throwing the toad out of the window, where it was followed by an agonized shriek from Toddie. Again he felt, and his search was rewarded by the tension-screw of Helen's sewing-machine. Then I attempted some research myself, and speedily found my fingers adhering to something of a sticky consistency. I quickly withdrew my hand, exclaiming, "What nasty stuff have you got in your pocket, Toddie?"

"'Tain't nashty 'tuff—it's byead and 'lasses, an' it's nice, an' Budge an' me hazz little tea-parties in de shicken-coop, an' we eats it, an' it's lovely."

All this was lucid and disgusting, but utterly unproductive of button-hooks, and meanwhile the breakfast was growing cold. I succeeded in buttoning Toddie's shoes with my fingers, splitting most of my nails in the operation. I had been too busily engaged with Toddie to pay any attention to Budge, whom I now found about half dressed and trying to catch flies on the window-pane. Snatching Toddie, I started for the dining-room, when Budge remarked reprovingly—

"Uncle Harry, you wasn't dressed when the bell rang, and you oughtn't to have any breakfast."

True enough—I was *minus* collar, cravat, and coat. Hurrying these on, and starting again, I was once more arrested:

"Uncle Harry, must I brush my teeth this morning?"

"No—hurry up—come down without doing anything more, if you like, but come—it'll be dinner-time before we get breakfast."

Then that imp was moved, for the first time that morning, to something like good-nature, and he exclaimed with a giggle—

"My! What big stomachs we'd have when we got done, wouldn't we?"

At the breakfast-table Toddie wept again, because I insisted on beginning operations before Budge came. Then neither boy knew exactly what he wanted. Then Budge managed to upset the contents of his plate into his lap, and while I was helping him to clear away the *débris*, Toddie improved the opportunity to pour his milk upon his fish, and put several spoonfuls of oatmeal porridge into my coffee-cup. I made an early excuse to leave the table, and turn the children over to Maggie. I felt as tired as if I had done a hard day's work, and somewhat appalled at realising that the day had barely begun, I lit a cigar, and sat down to Helen's piano. I am not a musician, but even the chords of a hand-organ would have seemed sweet music to me on that morning. The music-book nearest to my hand was a church hymn-book, and the first air my eye struck was "Greenville."

"What's the matter *now*, Toddie?"

"Don't want dat old tune; wantsh dancin' tune, so I can dance."

I promptly played "Yankee Doodle," and Toddie

began to trot around the room with the expression of a man who intended to do his whole duty. Then Budge appeared, hugging a bound volume of "St. Nicholas." The moment Toddie espied this, he stopped dancing, and devoted himself anew to the task of weeping.

"Toddie," I shouted, springing from the piano-stool, "what do you mean by crying at everything? I shall have to put you to bed again, if you're going to be such a baby."

"That's the way he always does, rainy days," explained Budge.

"Wantsh to see the whayal what fwallowed Djonah," sobbed Toddie.

"Can't you demand something that's within the range of possibility, Toddie?" I mildly asked.

"The whale Toddie means is in this big red book—I'll find it for you," said Budge, turning over the leaves.

Suddenly a rejoicing squeal from Toddie announced that leviathan had been found, and I hastened to gaze. He was certainly a dreadful-looking animal, but he had an enormous mouth, which Toddie caressed with his pudgy little hand, and kissed with tenderness, murmuring as he did so—

"Dee old whay-al, I loves you. Is Djonah all gonaded out of your 'tomach, whay-al? I finks it was weal mean in Djonah to get froed up when you hadn't nuffin' else to eat, poor old whay-al."

"Of course Jonah's gone," said Budge; "he went to heaven long ago—pretty soon after he went to Nineveh an' done what the Lord told him to do. Now swing us, Uncle Harry."

The swing was on the piazza, under cover from the rain; so I obeyed. Both boys fought for the right to swing first, and when I decided in favour of Budge, Toddie went off, weeping, and declaring that he would look at his dear whay-al anyhow. A moment later his wail changed to a piercing shriek; and, running to his assistance, I saw him holding one finger tenderly, and trampling on a wasp.

"What's the matter, Toddie?"

"Oo—oo—ee—ee—ee—I putted my finger on a waps, and—oo—oo—the nasty old waps—oo—bited me. An' I don't like wapses a bit, but I likes whay-als—oo—ee—ee."

A happy thought struck me.

"Why don't you boys make believe that big packing-box in your play-room is a whale?" said I.

A compound shriek of delight followed the suggestion, and both boys scrambled upstairs, leaving me a free man again.

"Does the court understand you to say, Mr. Jones, that you saw the editor of the *Augur of Freedom* intoxicated?" "Not at all, sir; I merely said that I had seem him frequently so flurried in his mind that he would undertake to cut out copy with the snuffers—that's all."

A CLERK having put some candles in a cellar one day, the proprietor told him that he thought it was too damp a place for them, and that they would be likely to mould. "Likely to mould!" replied the clerk; "if that is the case, we had better put our tallow there also, and perhaps it will mould into candles."

A Climax in Orthography.

AN old man who owns a stall took a notion a few days since to use his spare time to better his education. Procuring a spelling-book, his face was seen behind it whenever business was dull. He tired, however, of spelling the words to himself, and engaged the services of a boy about thirteen years old, having the next stall, to hear his lessons.

Everything passed off all right for two or three days, and then a storm arose and a climax came. Holding the book in both hands, the boy observed—

"We now come to the word 'welcome.' How do you spell it?"

"Well, sir, I spell it 'w-e-l-k-u-m.'"

"Not correct."

"'K-o-m,' then."

"Nary."

"Then it is 'k-i-o-m.'"

"No, sir."

"Boy, don't you lie to me!" warned the old man.

"I'll resign my office," replied the lad, as he laid the book down. "I've let you go on and spell 'cat' with a 'k,' 'horse' without any 'e,' 'boy' with a double 'o' to it, because you are old, and I don't want to hurt your feelings; but when you call me a liar, and don't even know how to spell the word, it's time for me to resign."

A New Game.

A MAN went into a restaurant, and mounting a high stool, leaned over the counter and ordered a steak with potatoes, and some ale and oysters to begin on. In about half an hour he had finished his repast, and was beginning to deliberate on what kind of dessert he would wind up on, when a man walked in, and, tapping him on the shoulder, remarked—

"Is your name Billy Hicks?"

"Yes, that's my name," said the man on the stool, as his hand stole down to his hip-pocket, fumbling for the handle of a pistol. "What do you want?"

"We had a little trouble once before in White Pine, and now I guess I've got you dead to rights," continued the new-comer, pulling out a large-sized six-shooter.

"If you'll just step into the street and pace off your distance, I'm your man," said the feeder, who had just finished his pie, and, whipping out a revolver, he sprang off his perch and rushed after the other into the street.

The frightened restaurant man got down behind the counter and bent his ear to listen to the shots and the rush of the mob; but he did not hear anything unusual, and in about five minutes he recollected that there was seven shillings owing on the meal. Then he went out to the front to investigate.

"Was there a row out there a few minutes ago?" he inquired of a star-gazer.

"Didn't see any. I've been here for the last half hour or so."

"See two fellows with ulsters and revolvers come out?"

"Yes; they were talkin' about swappin' guns, and they're over across the way now, takin' a drink."

The restaurant man went back to clear up the dishes, feeling that he had been made the victim of a new game.

Music in Bulgaria.

DAY and night the river murmurs, tumbling over a weir beneath my house; day and night, but especially at this hour, frogs twitter and croak in such a chorus that one must speak loud to be heard above their din. The sound is not quite that to which we are used in England—much longer sustained and more musical, but a nuisance incomparably greater. There are worse noises in Tirno, however. Lo! a gentleman, inspired by the moonlight, has struck up the Bulgarian hymn. While looking over the prospect I have described, he has the audacity to intone his national songs. We have all been told that the Bulgarian ballads are quite unequalled by anything later than the Homeric series. It may be so; I would not give an opinion on a subject of which I know nothing. I once met a *savant* who declared that the Nahuatl dialect of the Toltec speech was or is—for I know not—the most perfect form of language; and I rigorously abstained from arguing the point. But a man can hear when he cannot understand; and though the gentleman next door be reciting words that burn, I say, give me the frogs! I would fain cry to him, "Silence, and let us hear the sweet harmonies of the Batrachian!" I do not recollect to have suffered from such prolonged and inexorable music of the nose since I cruised in the China seas. The "Herr Professor," of whom you may remember to have heard at Paratchin during the war last year, could out-howl most dogs on a moonlight night, when a sufficient crowd of admirers excited him to his best nasal "stop." But my unknown Bulgarian could beat him by a nose.

A Wonderful Weapon.

MR. WHISTLETRIGGER has just invented one of the most destructive firearms—that is, it will kill at a longer range than any gun ever manufactured, and is very apt to kill a man when he is not ready, or expecting to be killed. Whistletrigger gave an exhibition of the wonderful merits of his rifle.

The gun has all the appearance of an ordinary cartridge rifle, except the bore is large, and the barrel is seven and a half feet long. Mr. Whistletrigger had a man to place a target six feet in diameter away eighteen miles. Those who had telescopes could plainly see this.

When everything was arranged, Mr. Whistletrigger produced a copper cartridge, which he said would be placed in the gun and exploded by the hammer, the charge of powder would throw the ball and eight other cartridges—all being included in the first cartridge—a distance of two miles; at this juncture a fuse in the eighth cartridge exploded the eighth charge of powder, which threw the seven remaining cartridges two miles farther, when a like

fuse produced a like explosion and result, and so on, there being nine cartridges, one within the other, and only one ball, which was fixed to the shell of the ninth cartridge, and as each charge of powder threw the ball two miles, there being nine charges, of course the gun would shoot eighteen miles.

Mr. Whistletrigger fired seven times, and hit the target each time at the distance, eighteen miles. All who witnessed the firing were highly pleased, but when Whistletrigger fired the eighth time the cartridge exploded as usual, throwing the ball and eight remaining cartridges the distance of two miles, when, by some mishap, the cartridges became turned ball end towards the spectators, and the fuse exploded the cartridge while in this position. The result was that the ball came back, falling on the floor above the heads of the crowd, which lost no time in getting away.

Mr. W. says that by increasing the size of his gun and number of cartridges, he can shoot around the world.

Going to Sea.

A RATHER enthusiastic boy, after finishing the last chapter of a book called "The Pleasures of the Deep," pleaded with his father to let him ship aboard a small schooner. The old man smiled a grim smile, took the case under consideration, and in a few days the boy was on the rolling deep, having shipped as a greenhorn on a vessel in the coal trade. He sailed to Tynemouth, came down and crossed to Hull, and next week he appeared at home, lame and stiff, his throat sore, one eye nearly shut, and a feeling of humbleness running all through him.

"What, back again!" cried the old man, as the boy entered the house.

"Yes, father. I want to saw all the wood for winter, bring in all the coal, clean out the cellar, and paint the barn; and you needn't give me but two meals a day."

"Don't you like sailing?"

"Father, you don't understand anything about it. The captain sailed away on Sunday the same as any other day, and I believe he swore even harder. He wouldn't give me an umbrella when it rained, he made me sit up most all night, and two or three times he called me up at midnight, and made me haul ropes and drag old sails about. There wasn't a single night when all of us got off to bed at nine o'clock, and there wasn't a day that he did not bully us about, and stop us every time we got reading anything good. I like land, father, and I wish you owned a farm."

The old man chuckled, and the boy turned away from "Peter Simple" last week with a shudder.

A THIEF, who lately broke open a grocer's warehouse, excused himself on the plea that he only went to take tea.

A STUDENT, being asked how many genders there were, said "Three: masculine, feminine, and neutral;" and defined them as follows:—"Masculine, men; feminine, women; and neutral, old bachelors."

That Big Frog.

IT was remembered afterward that he had a sneaking, low-down look. He called at the aquarium, and asked if they didn't want a Lake St. Clair frog to put in it, and he added—

"Gentlemen, it is a frog I caught myself, and he really ought to be on exhibition. I never saw a frog of his size before."

"How large is it?" inquired a sergeant, instinctively glancing toward the top of the stove.

"Gentlemen, I hate to give you the figures, because I'm a stranger," replied the man.

"There's some old whoppers up in the lake; I've seen 'em as big as a stove-cover, and even bigger."

"Well, some one ought to have this frog who can feed him up well," said the stranger. "I aint much on natural science, and I've seen about all there is to see; but this frog—great heavens! Some man ought to take him round the country."

"How did you catch him?" asked the captain.

"Run him down with a tug, and threw a fish-net over him."

"And he's a monster, eh?"

"A monster! Well, I don't want to give you dimensions. Three reporters were at my house last night to get his length over all, breadth of beam, and carrying capacity, but I wouldn't let them in. I don't care for the glory of the capture, but simply desire the advancement of science."

"I've heard sailors tell of seeing frogs up there as large as nail-kegs; but I thought they were lying," observed the sergeant.

"Nail-kegs! Why, d'ye suppose I'd come around here with a frog which you could put into a nail-keg?"

"I suppose he'd go into a barrel?" tremblingly remarked the sergeant.

"Gentlemen, you may have sailed across Lake St. Clair," coldly replied the stranger, "but it's plain to me that you never shoved a boat through the marshes. Would I fool away time on a frog no larger than a barrel? Would a tug-boat chase such a frog?"

"I shouldn't be a bit surprised if this frog was as large as a hogshead," said the captain. "I've seen 'em up there even larger than that."

"A hogshead! Gentlemen, I see that you don't care for this frog; you are willing that I should ship it away to some other town. Good-bye, gentlemen."

"Hold on!" cried the captain, holding out his last cigar. "We believe you, of course. If you said this frog was as long as a waggon-box, I should believe you, for I've seen 'em up there fully as large as that. Please, give us the dimensions of this frog."

The man lit his cigar, took a pill-box from his vest-pocket, and shaking out a frog not over three days transformed from a pollywog, he quietly observed—

"Gentlemen, get out your measures."

When they rose up he had vanished.

It is hard to tell which will bring the most pleasant expression into a woman's face: to tell her that her baby is heavy, or her bread light.

A Suicidal Station.

WORKING man, sir; one o' them strange individuals that everybody's been going into fits about lately as to what they should do with us and for us, and a deal—a great deal more, how to legislate us and represent us. We don't want legislating an' representing. I tell you what we want, sir—we want letting alone. Some people runs away with the idea that your working man's a sort of native furrin wild animal, that wants keepers and bars an' all sorts to keep him in order—that he's something different to your swell that holds up a 'sumptive umbrella at me when he wants a kebb, and tells me, "Aw—to—aw, dwive to the Gweat Westawn or Chawing Cwoss." Well, and p'raps they're right to some extent; for your working man, sir, is a different sort of thing. Supposing we take your human being, sir, as a precious stone; well, set down your working man as the rough pebble, whilst your swell's the thing cut and polished.

Fine thing that cutting and polishing, makes the stone shine and twinkle and glitter like anything; but I have heerd say that it takes a little off the vally of the original stone; while, if its badly cut, it's old gooseberry. Now, you know, sir, I have seen cases where I've said to myself, "That stone's badly cut, Dick;" and at other times I've set down a fare at a club or private house, or what not, and I've been ready to ask myself what he was ever made for. Ornament, p'raps. Well, it might be for that; but, same time, it seems hardly likely that Natur' had time to make things without their having any use. You may say flowers are only ornamental, but I don't quite see that, sir; for it always seemed to me as the smallest thing that grew had its purpose, beginning with the little things, and then going on right up to the big things, till you get to horses, whose proper use is, of course, to draw kebs.

I've been most everything in my day, sir, before I took to kebs, but of all lines of life there isn't one where you get so much knowledge of life, or see so much, as you do on a box; while of all places in the world, there's no place like London. I've never been out of it lately, not further than 'Ampton Court, or Ascot, or Epsom—stop; yes, I did once have eight hours at the sea-side with the missus, and enough too. What's the good of going all they miles when you can smell the sea air any morning early on London Bridge, if the tide's coming in; or, easier still, at any stall where they sell mussels or oysters?

Talk about furrin abroad, give me London. Why, where else d' yer see such dirt—friendly dirt—sticks to you, and won't leave go? Where else is there such a breed of boys as ours, though they do always want cutting down behind? Where such pleecemen, though they are so precious fond of interfering, and can't let a man stand five minutes without moving him on? No, sir, London's the place for me, even if it does pour down rain, and splash up mud, till you tie a red cotton soaker round the brims of your hat to keep the rain water from trickling through and down your neck, for, you see, it's soft enough for anything.

London's the place, sir, for me; but I didn't

always live in London. I used to be down at Gravelwick, a little station on the Far Eastern line—porter, sir—railway porter, though you mightn't think it.

Gentleman in uniform in those days. Short corduroy jacket, trousers, and weskit; red patch on the collar with F. E. R., in white letters, on it, and a cap with the same letters in brass on the front. Sort of combination of the useful and ornamental, I were, in those days.

Nice life, porter's, down at a small station with a level crossing. Lively, too, opening gates, and shetting on 'em; trimming lamps, lightin' 'em, and then going up a hiron ladder to the top of a pole to stick 'em up for signals, with blue and red spectacles to put before their bulls' eyes, so that they could see the trains a-coming, and tell the driver in the distance whether it was all right.

Day-time I used to help do that, too, by standing up like a himage holding a flag till the train fized by; for it wasn't often as one stopped there. Sitting on a cab's lonely on a wet day; but talk about a lonely life—porter's at a little station's 'nough to give you the horrors. I should have tried to commit suicide myself, as others did, if it hadn't been for my taters.

Yes—my taters. I had leave to garden a bit of the slope of the cutting, and it used to be my aim to grow bigger taters than Jem Tattley, at Slowcombe, twenty mile down the line; and we used to send the fruit backards and forrards by one of the guards to compare 'em. I beat him reg'lar, though, every year, 'cause I watered mine more reg'lar in the dry times; and proud I was of it. Ah, it's a werry elewating kind o' pursuit, is growing taters; and kep' up my spirits often when I used to get low in the dark, soft, autumn times, and get afraid of being cut up by one of the fast trains.

Terribly dangerous they are to a man at a little station, for he gets so used to the noise that he don't notice them coming, and then—There, it would be nasty to tell you what comes to a pore porter who is not on the look-out.

I had a fair lot to do, but not enough; and my brightest days used to be when, after sitting drowsing there on a barrow, some gent would come by a stopping train—fishing, p'raps—and want his traps carried to the inn, two miles off; or down to the river, when our young station-master, p'raps, would let me off, and I stopped with the gent fishing.

Sometimes I give out the tickets—when they were wanted; but a deal of my time was taken up watching the big daisies growing on the gravelly bank, along with the yaller ragcoat, or counting how many poppies there was, or watching the birds chirping in the furze-bushes. I got to be wonderful good friends with the birds.

We had a siding there for goods; but, save a little corn now and then, and one truck of coals belonging to an agent, there was nothing much there. There was no call for anything, for there would have been no station there only that, when the line was made, the big swell as owned the land all about wouldn't give way about the line going through his property unless the company agreed to make a station, and arrange that he could stop fast trains by signal whenever he wanted to go up to London, or come down, or to have his friends; for, of course,

he wouldn't go by the penny-a-miler parliamentary that used to crawl down and stop at Gravelwick.

We had a very cheerful time of it, me and the station-masters—young fellows they used to be—half-fledged, and I saw out six of them; for they used only to be down there for a short time before they got a change. I used to long to be promoted, and tried two or three times; but they wouldn't hear of it; and the smooth travelling inspector who used to come down would humbug me by telling me that I was too vallerble a servant to the company to be changed, for I acted as a sort of ballast to the young station-masters.

This being the case, I got thinking I ought to get better pay, and I told him so; and he said I was right, and promised to report the case; but whether he did so or didn't, and, if he did, whether he made a loud enough report, I don't know; 'tall events, I never got no rise, but had eighteen shillings a week when I went on the line, and eighteen shillings a week when I came off five years after.

Me and the station-master used to chum it, the station being so lonesome. When the young chaps used first to come down, they used to come the big bug, and keep me at a distance, and expect me to say "sir." But, lor' bless you, that soon went off, and they used to get me to come and sit with them, to keep off the horrors—for we used to get 'em bad down there—and then we'd play dominoes, or draughts, or cribbage, when we didn't smoke.

It was a awful lonesome place, and somehow people got to know it, and they'd come from miles away to Gravelwick.

"What for?" says you.

There, you'd never guess, so I'll tell you—to commit suicide.

It was too bad on 'em, because it made the place horrible. I wasn't afraid of ghosts; but after having one or two fellows come and put themselves before the fast trains, and having inquests on 'em, for the life of you you couldn't help fancying all sorts of horrors on the dark nights.

Why, that made several of our young station-masters go. One of 'em applied to be removed, and because they didn't move him he cut off—threw up his place, he did—but I had to stay. It was that, though, and the want of more money, made me give up porter—don't mean beer, sir, by no manner o' means—an' take to a keb.

Things got so bad at last that the station-master and me used to look at every passenger as alighted at our station suspicious like if he was a stranger; and we found out several this way, bless you; and if we couldn't persuade 'em to go away to some other station to do what they wanted, or bring 'em to a better turn of mind, we used to lock 'em up in the lamp-room, and telegraph to Tenderby for a policeman to fetch 'em away.

Oh, it was fine games, I can tell you, only it used to give you the creeps; for some of these parties used to be wild and mad, though others was only melancholy and stupid.

Some on 'em was humbugs—chaps in love, and that sorter way—as never meant to do it, only to make a fuss and be saved, so as their young women could hear as they meant to die for their sake, and

so on; but others was in real earnest; for the fact of one doing it there seemed like a 'traction to 'em, and they'd come for miles and miles right away from London.

It was a lively time being at a suicidal station; and though the station-masters and I kept the strictest of look-outs, we got done more'n once; for a fellow would get out right smart, go off, and then, artful-like, dodge back to the line a mile or so away, and the fust we'd hear of it would be from an engine driver who had gone over him.

Well, it happens one day that I was alone at the station, when a quiet, gentlemanly sort of a fellow gets out, smiles, asks me some questions about the place, and chats pleasantly for a bit, says he means to have a 'tanical ramble—as he calls it—and finishes off by giving me arf-crown.

Now, if I'd been as wide-awake as I should have been, I might have known as there was a screw loose. What should a strange gent give me arf a crown for if there wasn't? but, bless you, clever and cunning as I thought myself, I was that innercent that I pockets the coin, grins to myself, and took no further notice till, about arf an hour after, I happens to look along the up line, when I turns sick as could be; for I sees my gentleman walking between the lines, and the up express just within a few minutes of being due.

Even then he'd so thrown me off my guard that I never thought no wrong, only that he was looking on the railway banks for rhodum siduses, and plants of that kind.

So I shouts to him—

"Get off that 'ere!" and waves my hands.

But he takes no notice; and then, all at once, just as the wind brought the sound of the coming express, if he didn't lie down flat, and lay his neck right on the off up-rail, ready for the engine-wheels to cut it off.

It was like pouring cold water down my back, but I was man enough to act; and, running as hard as I could, I got up to where he lay—about three hundred yards from the station.

I makes no more ado, but seizes his legs, and tries to drag him away; but he'd got tight hold of the rail with both hands—for it was where the ballast was clear away from it, to let the rain run off—and I couldn't move him; 'sides which, he began to kick at me fierce, roaring at me to get away.

Finding as I couldn't move him, and the train coming nearer, and being afraid that I should get in danger myself if I got struggling with him, I thought I'd try persuasion.

"What are you going to do?" I says.

"Tired of life—tired of life—tired of life," he kept on saying, in a curious, despairing way.

"Get up—get up," I roared.

For the train was coming on. I could hear it roaring in the distance; and I knew it would spin round the curve into sight, and then dash along the straight to where we were.

"Go away," he cried, hoarsely; "tired of life."

"There was another fellow cut all to pieces there," I says, trusting to frighten him.

"I know—I know," he said; "three hundred yards north of the station."

He must have read that in a noosepaper, and saved it up, you know.

What to do I couldn't tell. I wasn't able to move him, for he clung to the rails as if he grew there, and the train was coming.

All I could see to do was to run on and try to stop it; but that wouldn't have done, for the engine would have been over the poor wretch before the breaks would have acted; and at last, with the roar coming on, I stood there in the six foot, and I says, savage like—

"It's too bad; see what a mess you'll make."

"What?" he says, lifting up his head, and staring at me a horribly stiff, hard look, as of one half dead.

"See what a mess you'll make," I says, "and I shall have to clean it up."

"Mess," he says, raising himself, and kneeling there in the six-foot on the ballast.

"Yes, mess," I says—"blood, brains, bits of flesh and bone in tatters, rags of clothes, and something so horrid all over the line, that it's enough to make a strong man sick."

"I never thought of that," he says, putting his hands to his head.

And as he did so there was a shriek, a rush, a great wind, which sent the dust and sticks flying, and the express thundered by, with that poor chap staring at it.

As it passed, he looked at it with a sort of shudder.

"You don't know what a mess it makes," I said, as he got slowly up.

"No," he says, in a curious way—"no, I never thought of that." And he began to brush the dirt and dust off his clothes. "But I thought it would not hurt."

"Not you, perhaps," I said, trying to keep his attention; "but how about me?"

"Yes, yes," he muttered, "I never thought of that."

And he stooped down, touched the rail with his finger, looked at it, shuddered, and then looked up the line.

"I tell you it's horrid," I said; "and it's cowardly of a fellow to come here for that. Now, then, you'd best come on to the station."

"Yes," he said again, "I never thought of that."

And he let me brush him down, and followed me like a lamb to the station, where, unbeknown to him, I telegraphed to the town, and a constable came and took him by the next train, with all the spirit regularly took out of him by my words.

I'd about forgotten that poor chap till about six months after, when he came down by the stopping train, and shook hands with me, and gave me a five pound note.

I was afraid he was going to try it on again, but no, bless you. He thanked me with tears in his eyes for saving his life, telling me he was half mad at the time, and determined—something pulling him like—to end his life. He had felt no fear, and was glad the train was coming, when my words sounded so queer and strange to him that they seemed, as he said, to take all the romance out of the thing, and show it to him in, to use his own words, "its

filthy, contemptible, cowardly shape. If men could see," he said, "they would never commit such an act."

I saw him off again in the train, and was werry glad when he was gone.

That affair about settled me. I was sick of it; and as soon as I could—close upon a year arter, though—I came up to London and took to cabbings, for I'd had quite enough of a soocidal station.

A Frenchman Puzzled.

THE English language is often a puzzle to foreigners, and sometimes drives even an hotel-keeper into a corner, as for instance in the following experience, where a wealthy French guest came to complain at the office, and was there met by the gracious host, who rose to explain.

"What for, sare, your *garçon* not present my demand?"

"Your demand, monsieur?"

"Yes, sare. Do I speak Inglis parfait, sare—do you comprehend me, sare?"

"Certainly; your English is perfectly correct, my dear sir. What is it you desire?"

"Vy, sare, you tell me I can have at my private table wis my friends whatever I desire to manger—pardon, to eat."

"Certainly, anything—stewed sovereigns and diamond sauce, if you wish."

"Ah, no, monsieur, zat is too riche. I simply desire some grice."

"Eh? Some what?"

"Some grice—such as I eat for my dinner ze ozer day."

"Ah, you mean rice—boiled rice. Certainly, all the rice you desire."

"No, sare, it is not rice. Zat is what zat premier *garçon*—head-waitare—say. It is a bird I want, sare. I want him roast, not boil."

"Roast grice? why, let me see," said the host, in a dilemma, not wishing to appear ignorant of his guest's meaning. "I don't believe there is a single grice in the market."

"Ah, you make mistake ven you say 'single' grice."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sare. Vat you call a leetle rat, a-a?"

"Mouse?" suggested the hotel proprietor.

"Yes. Zen two of zem; vat you call two—mice, eh?"

"Quite correct," responded the host.

"Zen if one is ze bird you call grouse, two is vat you call grice, eh?"

"Why, not exactly," said the host, struggling to keep countenance; "we say two grouse, just as we say two sheep or two deer. But for mouse, mice, and—"

"Yes, sare," said monsieur, triumphantly, "an' vy not you say two hice for two houses?"

A YOUNG lady explained to her inamorato the distinction between printing and publishing, and at the conclusion of her remarks, by way of illustration, she said, "You may print a kiss on my cheek, but you must not publish it."

How to Marry Them.

SCHEMING mammas take a great deal of pains in the season to find husbands for their daughters, but no one was ever so successful as old Sallenger, who was noted for having had twelve daughters, all of whom married well.

Sallenger was a gentleman farmer down in Essex, and he was in conversation with a neighbour one day after dinner, when the ladies had gone, and the talk had been for some time on agricultural produce, when the neighbour, who had five unmarried daughters, suddenly exclaimed—

"Sallenger, I don't see how it is that your girls all marry off as soon as they get old enough, while none of mine can marry."

"Oh, that's simple enough. I marry my girls off on the buckwheat straw principle."

"On the what?"

"Buckwheat straw principle."

"What, in the name of fortune, do you mean?"

"Take another glass of claret," said Sallenger, "and I'll tell you."

The glasses were filled, and he went on—

"Well, I used to raise a good deal of buckwheat, and it puzzled me to know how to get rid of the straw. Nothing would eat it, and it was a great bother to me.

"At last I thought of a plan. I stacked my buckwheat straw nicely, and built a high rail fence around it. My cattle, of course, concluded that it was something good, and at once tore down the fence, and began to eat the straw.

"A wicked old donkey set the example—a fellow who always led the way in all mischief. So I drove them away, and put up the fence a few times; but the more I drove them away the more anxious they became to eat the straw. After this had been repeated a few times, the cattle determined to eat the straw, and eat it they did, every bit of it.

"As I said, I marry my girls off on the same principle. When a young man that I don't like begins calling on my girls, I encourage him in every way I can; I tell him to come often and stay as late as he pleases, and I take pains to hint to the girls that I think they had better set their caps for him. It works first-rate. He don't make many calls, for the girls treat him as coolly as they can. But when a young fellow that I like comes—a man that I think would suit me for a son-in-law—I don't let him make many calls before I give him to understand that he isn't wanted at my house. I tell the girls, too, that they shall not have anything to do with him, and give them orders never to speak to him again.

"The plan always works capitally.

"The young folks begin to pity each other, and the next thing I know they are engaged to be married.

"When I see that they are determined to marry, I always give in, and pretend to make the best of it. That's the way I manage it."

"Humph!" said his neighbour. "Well, the ways of woman are wonderful, and for obstinacy they beat everything."

"Of course they do," said Sallenger. "Do you

think that Eve would have touched the apple if it had not been forbidden? Not she."

"I believe you are right," said the neighbour. "Buckwheat principle, though. I'll fence all my girls in, to-morrow."

He did; and in twelve months two were married and two engaged, and before the second year had passed, all were settled.

Try it.

A Hard Head.

WHEN the present illustrious Captain Riggan was a mere boy, his father owned a merino ram that was known far and near for the excessive hardness of his skull, and the terribleness of his butting qualities. Captain Riggan took butting lessons for six years under that ram. And never did tutor turn forth a more finished pupil. But the scholar at length proved too much for the master.

Young Riggan was in the habit of going off to a meadow every morning and having a "set-to" with that old ram. One day he went out, as usual, and, seeing a large crack in the meadow fence, he stuck his head through, and bleated. That made the old ram rambunctious, and he fetched a butt at Riggan's head. But Riggan quickly drew back, and let the rampageous ram ram his rampant head ram up against the fence, like a pavior's rammer on a stone.

Young Riggan was delighted with the trick, and repeated it several times, to the great discomfiture of his ramship.

But it happened that the crack in the fence was not the same size all the way along the panel, and so, one time, Riggan got his head through and wriggled his neck into a narrower part of the crack before he bleated. The fierce merino came charging down upon him, and Riggan tried to withdraw his cranium as he had done before. But his cranium wouldn't withdraw. The old ram had him dead.

There was no one stirring in that part of the farm. It was about ten o'clock in the morning; and from that hour till four in the afternoon not a sound broke the monotonous stillness of the lonely spot except the regularly repeated blows of the ram's skull against Riggan's. Then there was silence.

No one at the house knew where the youngster was. They missed him at dinner, and searched for him everywhere until supper time. Then they found him. He was lying with his head still through the crack of the fence—and sound asleep! Just on the other side of the fence lay the old merino ram—stone dead! He had butted himself to death against that adamant skull.

LITTLE Miss Quizbag wishes to know, if all the world's a stage, and men and women are merely players, where the audience and orchestra are to come from?

A NOBLEMAN observing a person, eminent for his philosophical talents, intent upon choosing delicacies at table, said to him, "What! do you philosophers love dainties?" "Why not?" returned the other. "Do you think, my lord, that the good things of this world were made for blockheads?"

The Famine in India.

THE Palmanair talug of the North Arcot district lies high above the ghâuts, and is continuous with the table-land of Mysore, which rises from 2,000 to 3,000 feet above the sea level. Like all this tract of country, it depends mainly on its dry cultivation and on shallow tanks for its small amount of rice. The subsoil water here lies from forty to fifty feet below the surface, and consequently there is no attempt at irrigation from wells, and the whole of this table-land is as dry and bare as a brickfield, except those patches which are never cultivated, and are given up to scrub jungle.

The poorer classes of the people, like the farm labourers and small peasant proprietors, are having a bad time of it in these dry uplands. Out of a gang of four hundred, men, women, and children, who were employed in making a road as a relief work, my friends who were with me picked out about fifty who were considered to be unfit for work on account of their great debility, emaciation, or other causes. Some of these were old people in whom dropsy of the legs and feet had already set in, and whose days were evidently numbered. Of the whole four hundred there were not one hundred who might be pronounced to be in a fairly healthy state. The men were thin and lantern-jawed, the women were worn, and their arms and busts shrunken away, and the children were preternaturally white.

These unfortunate creatures and all the poor of the district are so pressed for food that they are doing a thing which I have never heard of their doing before. The American or Mexican aloe grows very freely in the dry waste places of this district. It is used for fencing along the road sides and railways, and the plants after a few years of growth send up large flowering stalks to the height of eighteen or twenty feet, and as thick round as a man's thigh. The plant dies after seeding, and its place is taken by suckers spreading from the roots.

Owing to the long drought the aloe has been trying to burst into flower this year; but the starving people have found out that the flower stalk, or the pith which lines it, is not bad to eat, and the consequence is that every aloe plant for miles and miles around has been cut down to its heart, and immediately a flower shoot shows itself, it is at once laid hands on. This aloe pith is a sweet, starchy substance, which the people boil down with tamarinds, and eat. The aloe is a plant not indigenous to India. It was introduced here from America, and probably this is the first famine in which the people have been driven to eat it on a large scale.

In ordinary years the railway company pay labourers to cut down the flower stalks of their aloe fences; but this season the work will be done by voluntary labourers in search of food.

The Egotist's Note-book.

ANOTHER poor fellow killed by a fall from the top of an omnibus. When will Government, or the police, or the omnibus proprietors, or somebody else, interfere, and insist upon omnibuses stopping

for people to get up or alight? As it is, every outside passenger ought to be his own Blondin.

A great liking seems to have been displayed by young ladies for viewing the eclipse, especially when they had to be held steady while gazing through the glasses at the dark-faced moon. By the way, what a singular noise some binoculars make while being closed.

Lourdes is again becoming notorious on account of the "miracles" which it is alleged have taken place there. The *Univers* declares that ten have occurred, and mentions names in six cases. One woman, it is stated, who was given up by the doctors as in the last stage of consumption, has twice chanted the "Magnificat" before the crowd; but it is not stated whether her lungs have been sounded. The telegram says:—"Indescribable joy; prayers are being redoubled; our 200 patients are all hopeful." Simultaneously with this announcement comes the news that two young girls, in a fit of religious enthusiasm, have drowned themselves in the miraculous well at Marpingen, in Rhenish Prussia. I'm so glad—about the cures, of course, not about the drowning; and I hope the 200 patients are as hopeful as ever.

Here is a scrap from the cross-examination of the convict Benson:—

Mr. Williams: "When did you first make up your mind to give evidence against the defendants?"

Witness: "On the afternoon of the 24th of last month. That was after the conversation with Kurr in the chapel. I am thoroughly penitent for all my crimes and misdemeanours, and when justice has done with me I intend to lead a new life—God helping me. I am sorry to say that this is not the first time I have made this resolve. This time I mean it."

Mr. Williams: "Do you expect to get anything?"

Witness: "A great deal of abuse from you, Mr. Williams" (loud laughter).

Mr. Williams: "That is a very impertinent observation."

Rather cool this last remark. A barrister is, of course, never rude or impertinent.

Item, another scrap:

Mr. Poland: "What else?"—"I added, 'For you would get nothing out of it.' Meiklejohn turned round to Kurr, and remarked how pale I had turned on hearing that the whole thing had been stopped, or was about to be stopped. I believe Kurr then went out, and came back a few minutes after with a bottle of champagne."

"I suppose you three drank the champagne?"—"We did."

The Court adjourned for luncheon.

This last line is very suggestive. The mention of the champagne was irresistible.

At Sheffield a coroner's jury has returned a verdict of manslaughter against a carter, for causing the death of a married woman by beating her on the head with a frying-pan. And quite right, too;

for such forms of attention must be stopped. There is no accounting for the forms of weapon that some people will utilize when in a passion. Pat's wife was gentle. She always hit him with the soft end of the mop.

According to the *Standard*, the differences between Mr. Scudamore and the Porte have been satisfactorily arranged, and Mr. Scudamore retains his official position at Constantinople. The "Flying Scud," as he was nicknamed, objected to one of his best men being dismissed, solely because he was a Bulgarian. I hope Mr. Scudamore gained the day.

The gin and water question has been before Mr. Vaughan at the Bow-street police-court, a publican of St. Giles's being charged with having sold "a bottle of gin," 42 per cent. of which was water. For the prosecution evidence was given that the general custom of the trade was to render the gin at the reduced standard of 32 per cent., while it was contended for the defendant that he had a right to render the article to a state required by the purchaser. The magistrate held that, to be within the law, the publican must label such bottles "gin and water," and he imposed a penalty of £5 and costs. The adulteration Acts are working well; for though one must own that the more water there is with that peculiar "wanity," as Sam Weller called it, gin, the better, people might be allowed to mix it for themselves.

People are very wisely protesting against the grudging manner in which the public are allowed to see the Tower of London. Surely such arrangements might be made for the safety of the curiosities as to allow the visitors to walk through alone, as they do at the other national collections. As it is, they are marched through in gangs by a Beef-eater, and never have time to half see what they want, while every one who lags behind is ordered up in the most peremptory manner. Your humble servant, a short time since, while crossing the yard by the Tower chapel, paused for a minute to let his little daughter see a squad of the garrison troops being drilled, when a sergeant was despatched by the commissioned officer standing by to order us to move on.

Said the Baroness Burdett-Coutts—

Indirectly—"Those Russians are brutes; As you're starting a Turkish Compassionate Fund, Put my name down—two thousand pund."

Said an independent British party—

"The Turks get what they deserve, my hearty. If the Baroness did what was really nice, She'd have spent her thousands in famine rice."

Mr. Parnell, in a late speech, said—"This went on until the end of last session, when Mr. Biggar and himself could bear it no longer. They did not know then what they knew now—that their interference in English business would be received with almost savage ferocity by the English people, the

English press, and the English Parliament, or that threats of expulsion would be raised against them. They even turned him out of the House. He hoped the next time they turned him out they would turn him out more effectually, and let him go back to his constituents in Meath." (Hear, hear, HEAR, HEAR!!!!) These four "cheers" do not belong to the report.

Hackney carriages were established in London by one Captain Bailey, in 1625. The first regularly appointed stand was at the Maypole, in the Strand. The number in London was at first limited to 20, but within 30 years the authorized number was increased to 200. In the time of Charles II. a proclamation was issued, stating that the excessive number of hackney carriages (then about 400) was found to be a common nuisance, "by reason of their rude and disorderly standing and passing to and fro in and about our cities and suburbs; the streets and highways being thereof pestered and much impassable, the pavement broken up, and the common passages obstructed and made dangerous: henceforth none shall stand in the street, but only within their coachhouses, stables, and yards." In 1710 the number was limited to 800, which was increased to 1,000 in 1771, and to 1,100 in 1802. To-day there are as many in our streets as people like to put there; and yet, probably, we were never worse off for a decent cab and a civil driver.

What a funny thing fame is, and how oddly folks become famous! Here is Hobart Pacha, a gentleman who has deserted his own service to fight for a set of people whose deeds emulate those of the cruelest and vilest savages under the sun, made notorious in our shop windows; and, lastly, a song, expounding his gallant deeds, has been composed and sung, telling of the crafty Russian and the gallant Englishman, and how proud we must be of England's son. Why? Because he was shut up in the Danube, and ran for it as hard as his steamer would go. We shall have the gallant deeds of Baker Pacha put in song next week.

Mr. Cavill, the professional swimmer, has succeeded in his attempt to swim across the Channel, from Cape Grisnez to the English coast, and I hope he feels all the better for it. By this time, however, he must have found out that though it is a great feat for one man, it is a very ordinary one for two. Why did he not do it before Captain Webb? People would then have called him a hero. As it is, why he is—Mr. Cavill.

Somebody somewhere cites the following as a model speech for dinners attended by a bishop or two. He says he heard it himself a year or two ago:—

"My Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, and you, my Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, and you, my Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man—I have much pleasure in supporting the resolution which you, my Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, proposed, and you, my Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, seconded. My Lords, I had the honour, a year or two

ago, of breakfasting with my friend, the Lord Bishop of Gibraltar, and, my lords, I asked his lordship, in the confidence of private friendship, what he thought of this society. And what, my Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, and you, my Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, and you, my Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man, do you think his lordship's answer was? He said, my lords, 'I think it a very good society.' And so, my lords, do I."

And he sat down.

Mark Twain, speaking of journalism, says:—"I reported on a morning newspaper three years, and it was pretty hard work. But I enjoyed its attractions. Reporting is the best school in the world to get a knowledge of human beings, and human nature, and human ways. A nice gentlemanly reporter—I make no references—is well treated by everybody. Just think of the wide range of his acquaintanceship, his experience of life and society. No other occupation brings a man into such familiar social relations with all grades and classes of people. The last thing at night—midnight—he goes browsing around after items among the police and gaol-birds in the lock-up, questioning the prisoners, and making pleasant and lasting friendships among some of the worst people in the world. And the very next evening he gets himself up regardless of expense, puts on all the good clothes his friends have got, goes and takes dinner with the Governor or Commander-in-Chief of the district, the United States Senator, and some more of the upper crust of society. He is on good terms with all of them, and is present at every gathering, and has easy access to every variety of people. Why, I breakfasted almost every morning with the Governor, dined with the principal clergyman, and slept in the station-house. A reporter has to lie a little, of course, or they would discharge him. That is why I left it. I am different from Washington: I have a much grander and higher standard of principle. Washington could not tell a lie; I can lie, but I won't. Reporting is fascinating, but it is so distressing to have to lie so. Lying is bad—lying is very bad. Everybody knows that by experience. I think for a man to tell a lie, when he cannot make anything by it, is wrong."

PERFECTION.—MRS. S. A. ALLEN'S World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER III.—OUR PARSON.

IT might have been supposed that the feverish symptoms supervening, proceeded from cold consequent upon the wetting during the return from the water trip; but they did not, although it looked suspicious to see Alice tossing her head from side to side of her pillow; Madeline, tearful-eyed and flush-cheeked, passing a sleepless night; and both Frank Henderson and Stephen Vaughan "doing" no end of pipes, to try and calm the fretful nerves which laughed the potent fumes of nicotine to scorn.

Poor Madeline passed a sad, sleepless night; and upon rising early, and opening her window to admit the sweet, fresh morning breeze, laden as it was with the perfume of the refreshed earth, her first glance was at the old church and its thickly-strewn graveyard, separated only by a high hedge from the rectory garden; and, close as it was, the Rector had never thought its proximity a drawback, in spite of the talk made respecting cemeteries and extramural interments. In his quiet, serious way, he looked upon the churchyard as only another part of his garden—the ground where seed was sown in corruption, to be raised in incorruption. But the soil was not often disturbed, though whenever the sexton delved some one well-known was laid there; for the names upon gravestone and tablet were generally very familiar throughout the place.

So Madeline's first glance was at the church, and the next towards the garden, where, as she had expected, was the Rector himself, busy as one of the bees so hard at work rifling the yellow blossoms of his cucumbers, where the frames were open for the admission of light and air. She stood there, watching him with pleasure. And it was pleasant to watch the Rector in his garden. He scorned gloves; and there, with his silvery hair, darkened a little with perspiration, his face beaming with mingled heat and enjoyment—there he was, in one of his oldest black coats, hoeing, weeding, or watering some bed, or in other way carefully attending to the culture of the fruit, flowers, and vegetables which so frequently took prizes at the Edgeton horticultural *fêtes*.

But then his was a glorious old garden, even though it would have made a Scotch gardener with ribbon proclivities hold up his hands in sheer disgust. You could lose yourself there in the various paths and alleys; and when lost, you felt no disposition to find yourself again—that is to say, anywhere else. The borders were rich with old-fashioned country flowers, and the air was redolent with the perfume from pinks, carnations, wallflowers, and scores of other simple plants in profusion, but all cultivated to the highest pitch. It was not by newly-discovered flowers, nor by fresh seedlings, that Parson Glebeley gained his prizes, but by the perfection of the older kinds. He had no formal line drawn between flower and kitchen or fruit garden; but Plenty seemed to have run riot, and scattered the contents of her cornucopia in all directions. Along the backs of the flower borders ran noble old espalier apples, forming a sturdy hedge of green leaves, and green, yellow, red, or golden-

russet fruit. Pears, too, dangling from the horizontal boughs—here pale green, and there blushing and embrowned with the kisses of the ardent sun; walnut-like gooseberries; grape-like currants; cool, scarlet strawberries, peeping from out their leafy bed; peaches, nectarines, and apricots; plums tinged with a pearly, violet down, or hanging in great, golden drops from the gum-exuding branches; greengages, and big, black, blood-blown cherries, pendant one and all from the crumbling old red-brick wall—a perfect confusion of temptations. Every path displayed new riches; peas bursting their pods, and looking like boys whose clothes were too tight for them; beans climbing in bowers and blushing with their gay scarlet blossoms; cabbages and cauliflowers of the greenest and best; herbs whose fragrance whispered of clever culinary preparations; asparagus thrusting forth great, fat, green and purple heads from the trim bed; while under the great yew-hedge, and fully facing the south, was the hive-stand, heavy with its sweet-laden burdens, from whose straw portals hung late clusters of emigrant bees.

The Reverend Charles Glebeley preached loudly against pride, but how he nourished and cherished it in his own heart! Proud was he of his garden and its abundance. It was his hobby; and with his child near him, in one of the rustic seats, he seemed to have all he loved around, and looked the contentment of his heart. Proud of his garden was the parson, and hard did he work in it. Weeds? It seemed as if the whole of the tribes of million-seeding nuisances knew of the penalty attached to trespassers, and fled at the sight of the Rector and his gardener; for scarcely one was to be seen. They were not to be tempted by the rich soil to grow up swift and rank, and all on purpose to be dragged up by the roots, with not a scrap left behind to put forth a future shoot. No; the weeds knew better, and sought a poorer but more hospitable soil.

But the Rector had a hard time of it with his garden; all those luscious fruits and marrowy vegetables cost him no end of trouble and anxiety, for he was surrounded by deadly enemies. The birds acted so treacherously that he vowed he would commence shooting, and exterminate them. As for the sparrows that lived in the ivy-covered church-tower—a large colony, who stuffed every coigne of vantage with their ragged hay and straw nests, and brought up large broods of ugly, callow, yellow-billed sparrowkins—they were the worst enemies the parson had. But he respected the sparrows, for they were open in their dealings; they were brazen, but withal honest sort of thieves. They did not come into the garden, dropping down one by one upon the newly-sown beds, and professing to be after slug, grub, or wireworm, or looking for snails; they came boldly down in flocks to rob, and rob they did in full earnest—punching up the sprouting peas from the ground, picking up every atom of radish seed, while, as to onions or young brocoli, they would draw the tender young shoot from the earth, and after eating the attached seed, gently lay the thread down again. If the weather were dry, they would finish off with a dust-bath, twirling round and round and flapping their wings till they had

formed little craters in the smooth beds, and then, evidently considering they had been clever horticulturists, fly off, crying "Chiswick, Chiswick," to their ivy sanctuary.

Then there were the blackbirds and thrushes, who, in return for being allowed to rear their young in peace, used to hop along between the beds, ostensibly snail-seeking, but every now and then dig, dig went their beaks into some fine strawberry, or else, beneath the wall, poke into the ripe hanging fruit. As for wasps in the plum season, the wall used to be alive with them; and the bottles of sugar and water hung up as traps were nearly always full of sticky unfortunates—each vessel a perfect mortuary; but for all that, heedless of insecticidal contrivances, the survivors were continually cutting and carving away at nectarine, peach, or plum; while, as to the apricots and greengages, the only wonder was that there should be any left for those insidious marauders, the ants.

"No weeds!" said the Rector, in answer to a remark made by Madeline. "Well, no, not many; but it's hard work to keep them out. Ah," he continued, "it's a beautiful arrangement of nature by which seeds are wafted about from place to place, so as to drop miles away from the parent stem. It's a beautiful arrangement; but though I get plenty of weeds in that way, I never find any first-class flowers or vegetables come to fill my beds."

Then as Madeline, who had descended, stood looking on, the Rector disappeared, all but his coat-tails, in one of the frames, where a great deal of nipping, pegging, and laying down seemed to be always required. When at last he did show his face, it was red-hot, while his right ear was scarlet from the rubbing it had received. For several little horticultural difficulties had been discovered that morning. The ants had been at the apricots, having wriggled through the muslin, and attacked those intended for show; the big pet grub and fly destroyer had fallen into the well, where, being a toad, and a good swimmer, he looked very cool and comfortable, and after half an hour's trying with the bucket, refused to be fished out, and so had to be left to his fate; the worms, which came out after the previous night's shower, had drawn all the newly planted out lettuces into their holes; while the snails, which the Rector thought to have been exterminated, had been busy at work amongst the late strawberries.

In consequence of all these little unpleasanties, the Rector's ear had been rubbed red, and his face wore a comical expression of worry and annoyance.

"Tut, tut, tut, Maddy, no melons again," said the Rector, when they went down the garden again after breakfast.

"Indeed, papa," said Madeline. "How is that?"

"Oh, blight, blight, blight. Insect plagues. I shall give up gardening, for this must be a slice of Egypt. There never was any one so unfortunate over a garden as I always am. Look how those beautiful apricots were devoured this morning."

"I don't wonder at it, papa. It was enough to tempt any poor insect, when such as I could hardly refrain from picking them."

"Nonsense, child," said the Rector, continuing

his melon-pegging, while Madeline sat thoughtfully over her work; but only to start, as if alarmed, on hearing a step in the garden. And directly after Frank Henderson stood before her, hoping the rain had caused no ill effect, though, as a matter of course, he would not have called if that passage in one of the Greek authors had not puzzled him, and rendered it necessary that he should consult the Rector, who was a ripe scholar.

Frank very soon blurted out his reason for calling, when Madeline evidently thought that she might be *de trop*, so made the best of her way indoors, leaving Frank to master his passage, and go back home, burning with anger to think how he had thrown away the opportunity for a good half-hour's pleasant *tête-à-tête*.

Half-hour's? Ay, he might have had an hour's; for with the Rector he was "only Frank," the lad he had known from a child, and one whom he had had for pupil from the time of his leaving school till his visit to Alma Mater.

"Tut, tut, Frank," said the Rector, "they must be going backward, my boy—now they really must be going backward at these colleges since my time. I believe you are not so well up now as you were when you went."

"Indeed, sir," said Frank, colouring.

"Why, yes. Now, look here," said the Rector. "'Note K' in pencil—my own mark, as I always used to mark obscure passages. Turn to the leaves at the end. There you are, you see, all explained ready for you."

Frank said "Thank you," and turned the conversation by inquiring about some of the gardening matters. Then, seeing no further chance of a glimpse of Madeline, he took his leave; but only to meet Stephen Vaughan in the lane, when the young men—though each was most anxious to avoid the other—felt that there was no excuse for distant behaviour, and so tried to hide the constraint which hung about them.

Stephen half shuddered as he remembered the thoughts which came into his head upon the previous night, and even felt disposed to ask himself whether, for the moment, he had not been mad; while Frank knew that he had his old friend to thank for saving his life, so he could not afford to show any ill-feeling. Consequently, the young men strolled together towards the old hall, but had not reached the turning before they encountered the evil-looking face which had looked out of the mill window, and so bitterly cursed the half-drowned man; but upon this occasion there was also the body visible—a body which conveyed the ill-looking face by them almost without a salute; in fact, it would have been better if it had, for the surly nod spoke of anything but goodwill towards those saluted.

"Pon my word, Frank, I don't wonder at the governor regularly hating the sight of your respected parent," said Stephen.

"Parent," echoed Frank. "Come, I don't acknowledge that. He may be my mother's husband, but I can't stand anything nearer. But I tell you what, he's off to market; so I shall go home for a good hour or two's reading."

CHAPTER IV.—TAKING TO TASK.

SOON after parting from his old schoolfellow, Frank Henderson was sitting opposite to his mother at the mill-cottage, deep in a scholastic tome, whose contents it was absolutely necessary that he should transfer to his head. Mrs. Elton was busy rounding the heel of a stocking, her needles click-clicking away, as from time to time she glanced, with all a mother's pride at her big, well-grown son, "a much nicer looking lad than Mrs. Vaughan's," as she often told herself. But, then, Mrs. Elton was only a little worse than mothers in general, and could not help feeling so much admiration for her offspring.

Now Mrs. Elton was really a good sort of woman, even if she had certain weaknesses, not the least of which was a want of tone in the muscles controlling her organs of speech, especially that frail member, the tongue. She was naturally a speaker: not that she was in any way gifted in an oratorical sense, or able to indulge in lofty flights of rhetoric. Quite the contrary, her gift of speech was rapid, and that was its only strong point. Her ideas were not striking in originality, or vividness of conception; but she seemed to possess a mind easily fathomed, and at the end of twenty-four hours gave a stranger the idea that he knew all there was to know in Mrs. Sampson Elton. Poor, weak, amiable woman, she was as shallow and unworldly as her lord was profound and mundane; but then her nature, with all its shallowness, was rich in the milk of human kindness, a milk that bore upon its surface the thickest of cream; while in the profundity of the depth of her husband there was a sediment which, when stirred up, was nasty of the nastiest.

Frank had a good read that morning, then grew unsettled, and had a walk in the afternoon, and again was seated opposite Mrs. Elton, grinding away when the evening was closing in; and the good dame was beginning to fidget lest her boy's eyes should be strained with reading by so bad a light. But there was something else made Mrs. Elton fidget: she had a great objection to preserving silence for so long a time; but she could not venture to interfere with her son's researches in the Greek author before him. So the dame fidgeted, for she was dying to have a long talk to the student before the head of the family should come in from market.

At last Mrs. Elton hazarded a remark respecting candles and eyesight; and the remark had its effect, for it came at an opportune time, when the reader was battling with disinclination, and wanting a plausible excuse for giving up the day's studies. So in reply to Mrs. Elton's "Shall I ring for candles, my dear?" Frank closed his book, and drawing his chair closer to the open window, proposed one pipe before Mary illuminated the room.

"There, Mums," he said, "now we'll play, and give Jack a holiday."

"Ah, do, dear," said the anxious mother. "I'm sure you are reading too hard. You looked quite pale this morning."

"Nonsense," said Frank, lighting a formidable meerschaum, with bile written in its every curve.

"No, dear, it isn't nonsense," said Mrs. Elton; "and I'm sure you are trying too much. I don't want you to take degrees or anything of the kind if they can't be managed without making you ill. But, I say, Frank."

"Well, Mums?" said Frank.

"I want to talk to you, dear," not at all a novel desire upon the good dame's part.

"Then you've a capital chance while this pipe lasts," said Frank; "and then, I promise you, I shall want supper."

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Elton, "I wanted to say a few words to you—that is, to talk to you about—about—"

"Yes, Mums, 'about, about we go,'" sang Frank, *à la* Witch in "Macbeth."

"Now, don't be foolish, dear," said Mrs. Elton. "You know Mr. E. will soon be in, and I wanted to talk to you about Miss Glebeley—Madeline, you know, and Stephen Vaughan."

Frank was all attention in an instant, and his pipe gradually went out as he sat listening.

"About Stephen Vaughan and Miss Glebeley," hesitated Mrs. Elton, bringing her knitting to a standstill by dropping a needle, and then looking at her son as if she had just committed a crime.

"Well, mother?" said Frank, after a pause.

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Elton, with her hands in a state of nervous trepidation, and doing no end of mischief to her knitting, "why, my dear, don't you—that is—you know—don't you think he is far too attentive to her?" finishing the sentence with quite a burst.

Frank made no reply, and the dame continued—

"I don't think he ought to be, my dear, for I'm sure she is annoyed by his attentions; and don't you think, dear, as you are considered to be friends, that you ought to speak to him about it?"

"And get my head broke for my pains," muttered Frank, viciously.

"What, my dear?" said Mrs. Elton.

"Certainly not, mother," said Frank, sternly. "What right have I to interfere in such a matter? Of course Stephen is perfectly free to address Miss Glebeley."

"Now, *don't*, Frank," half whimpered Mrs. Elton, "don't, there's a good boy, pray don't begin bringing in your fine etty-quetty notions about a thing like this. I declare I believe you would sit still here and let your schoolfellow take away from you the nicest girl there is for miles round. Now, Frank," she continued, persuasively, "do stir yourself about it, and stop it. Indeed you ought."

"But, my dear mother," said Frank, "why should I interfere between Stephen and Miss Glebeley? He is a fine, likely young fellow, and—"

"*Don't*, *DON'T*, my dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Elton, now quite whimpering. "How can you talk in that way, when you know all the time you are at college she comes and sits with me hour after hour talking about you, and listening to your letters when I read them, and—"

"Why, you don't mean to say that you ever let her see my letters?" shouted Frank.

"Oh, yes, my dear," said his mother, with dignity. "Oh, yes, always; and she always helps me to write

to you again; for really, dear, I never know what to say, it is so tiresome writing to anybody. I'd rather talk at any time."

Poor Madeline! her cheeks must have been tingling at this time, if there is any credence to be placed in magnetic influence. And then for a while Frank sat and mused, and remained for some time silent; for, without being vain, his ideas accorded well with those of his mother, and her thoughts and aspirations touching Madeline Glebeley all lay upon the surface. Frank could not but think that, in spite of certain distant ways that had grown upon his old playmate of late, he had reason to believe that his suit would be received with favour; and allowing that such was the case, and his mother right, the interposition of a third party seemed certainly very unnecessary. No words of love had ever yet passed, while Madeline's behaviour had been nothing more than might have been expected from their early associations. But Mrs. Elton's words, and the events of the previous day, brought up a whole flood of recollections, upon which he was borne far away from the present, and far off into the future.

"You see, dear," said Mrs. Elton, breaking in upon his musing, "Mrs. Vaughan is a nice, good soul, and for your poor dear father's sake I shall always respect John Vaughan; but then I don't see why I should let my plans give way to theirs, and I know they have been putting that and that together nicely."

But Frank was in a deep musing fit, and could not answer. He was just feeling that he should like to be at rest upon the point at issue. It would be sweet indeed to be loved by the dark-eyed girl; but then might she not really already prefer his companion? Had she not been most distant of late? And then her father—what would he say?

Here he came to a full stop, for the figure of the rector, his old guardian, completely stopped the way, and was not easily to be overcome. "What would he say?" was rather a serious question, and one which the proposer could not answer. Love is very sweet at two-and-twenty, but then at the same age suspense is as bitter. However, the thinker determined to watch his opportunity and know his fate, and that, too, right soon; when, in spite of old friendship, if he were favoured, Stephen must give way, and his envious, sour looks would not be esteemed a jot.

On arriving at this point Frank relit his pipe; while all further conversation upon the subject was stayed by the entrance of Sampson Elton.

PERHAPS the best pun of this generation of lawyers was made by Lord Colonsay. A shoemaker of Aberdeen had fallen into a fortune, after having fallen into several misfortunes, chiefly from feminine causes. He sought to divorce his wife, and she sought to divorce him, and in the various suits some £2,000 or £3,000 was spent. Lord Deas, during a dispute about the wife's expenses, asked, "How would this shoemaker have got justice if he had been obliged to stick to his last?" The Lord President instantly answered, "He would have required to have spent his awl."

Tit-Bits from Helen's Babies.

"UNCLE HARRY, you crawl on your hands and knees and play you was a horse, and I'll ride on your back."

"No, thank you, Budge, not in the dirt."

"Then, let's play menagerie, an' you be all the animals."

To this proposition I assented, and after hiding ourselves in one of the retired angles of the house, so that no one could know who was guilty of disturbing the peace by such dire noises, the performance commenced. I was by turns a bear, a lion, a zebra, an elephant, dogs of various kinds, and a cat. As I personated the latter-named animal, Toddie echoed my voice.

"Miauw! Miauw!" said he; "dat's what cats saysh when they goesh down wells."

"Faith, an' it's him that knows," remarked Mike, who had invited himself to a free seat in the menagerie, and assisted in the applause which had greeted each impersonation. "Would you belave it, Misther Harry, that young dhivil got out the front door one mornin' afore sunroise, all in his little noight-gown, an' wint over to the docthor's an' picked up a kitten lyin' on the kitchen door-mat, an' throwed it down the well. The docthor wasn't home, but the missis saw him, an' her heart was that tindher that she hurried out and throwed boords down for the poor little baste to stand on, an' let down a hoe on a sthring; an' whin she got the poor little thing out she was that faint that she dhropped on the grass. An' it cost Mr. Lawrence nigh onto thirty dollars to have the docthor's well claned out."

"Yes," said Toddie, who had listened carefully to Mike's recital, "an' kittie-kittie said, 'Miauw! Miauw!' when she goed down ze well. An' Mish Doctor sed, 'Bad boy—go home—don't never tum to my housh no more'—dat's what she said to me. Now be some more animals, Ucken Hawwy. Can't you be a whay-al?"

"Whales don't make a noise, Toddie; they only splash about in the water."

"Zen grop in the cistern an' 'plash, can't you?"

"Toddie! Budge! who do you think is coming to see you this morning?"

"Who?" asked Budge.

"Organ-grinder?" queried Toddie.

"No, your papa and mamma."

Budge looked like an angel in an instant, but Toddie's eyes twitched a little, and he mournfully murmured—

"I fought it wash an organ-grinder."

"Oh, Uncle Harry!" said Budge, springing out of bed in a perfect delirium of delight, "I believe if my papa an' mamma had stayed away any longer, I believe I would die. I've been so lonesome from 'em that I haven't known what to do—I've cried whole pillowsful about it, right here in the dark."

"Why, my poor old fellow," said I, picking him up and kissing him, "why didn't you come and tell Uncle Harry, and let him try to comfort you?"

"I couldn't," said Budge; "when I gets lonesome, it feels as if my mouth was all tied up, an' a big great stone was right in here."

And Budge put his hand on his chest.

"If a big 'tone wazh inside of me," said Toddie, "I'd take it out an' froe it at the shickens."

"Toddie," said I, "aren't you glad papa and mamma are coming?"

"Yesh," said Toddie, "I fink it'll be awfoo nysh. Mamma always bwings me candy fen she goes anyfere."

"Now, boys," said I, "I want you to stay in the house and play this morning. If you go out of doors you'll get yourselves dirty."

"I guess the sun'll be disappointed if it don't have us to look at," suggested Budge.

"Never mind," said I, "the sun's old enough to have learned to be patient."

Breakfast over, the boys moved reluctantly away to the play-room, while I inspected the house and grounds pretty closely, to see that everything should at least fail to do my management discredit. A dollar given to Mike and another to Maggie were of material assistance in this work, so I felt free to adorn the parlours and Helen's chamber with flowers. As I went into the latter room I heard some one at the washstand, which was in an alcove, and on looking in I saw Toddie drinking the last of the contents of a goblet which contained a dark-coloured mixture.

"Izhe tatin black medshin," said Toddie; "I likes black medshin awfoo muts."

"What do you make it of?" I asked, with some sympathy, and tracing parental influence again.

When Helen and I were children we spent hours in soaking liquorice in water, and administering it as medicine.

"Makesh it out of shoda mitsure," said Toddie.

This was another medicine of our childhood days, but one prepared according to physicians' prescriptions, and not beneficial when taken *ad libitum*. As I took the phial—a two-ounce one—I asked—

"How much did you take, Toddie?"

"Took whole bottoo full—'twas nysh," said he.

Suddenly the label caught my eye—it read PAREGORIC. In a second I had snatched a shawl, wrapped Toddie in it, tucked him under my arm, and was on my way to the barn. In a moment more I was on one of the horses, and galloping furiously to the village, with Toddie under one arm, his yellow curls streaming in the breeze. People came out and stared, as they did at John Gilpin, while one old farmer whom I met turned his team about, whipped up furiously, and followed me, shouting "Stop thief!" I afterwards learned that he took me to be one of the abductors of Charlie Ross, with the lost child under my arm, and that visions of the 20,000 dollars reward floated before his eyes. In front of an apothecary's I brought the horse suddenly upon his haunches, and dashed in, exclaiming—

"Give this child a strong emetic—quick! He's swallowed poison!"

The apothecary hurried to his prescription desk, while a motherly-looking Irishwoman, upon whom he had been waiting, exclaimed—

"Holy Mither! I'll run an' fetch Father O'Kelley," and hurried out.

Meanwhile Toddie, upon whom the medicine had not commenced to take effect, had seized the apothecary's cat by the tail, which operation resulted in a considerable vocal protest from that animal.

The experiences of the next few moments were more pronounced and revolutionary than pleasing to relate in detail. It is sufficient to say that Toddie's weight was materially diminished, and that his complexion was temporarily pallid. Father O'Kelley arrived at a brisk run, and was honestly glad to find that his services were not required, although I assured him that if Catholic baptism and a sprinkling of holy water would improve Toddie's character, I thought there was excuse for several applications. We rode quietly back to the house, and while I was asking Maggie to try to coax Toddie into taking a nap, I heard the patient remark to his brother—

"Budgie, down to the village I was a whay-al. I didn't froe up Djonah, but I froed up a whole floor-full of uvver fings."

During the hour which passed before it was time to start for the *dépot*, my sole attention was devoted to keeping the children from soiling their clothes; but my success was so little, that I lost my temper entirely. First they insisted upon playing on a part of the lawn which the sun had not yet reached. Then, while I had gone into the house for a match to light my cigar, Toddie had gone with his damp shoes into the middle of the road, where the dust was ankle-deep. Then they got upon their hands and knees on the piazza, and played bear. Each one wanted to pick a bouquet for his mother, and Toddie took the precaution to smell every flower he approached—an operation which caused him to get his nose smothered in lily-pollen, so that he looked like a badly-used prize-fighter. In one of their spasms of inaction, Budge asked—

"What makes some of the men in church have no hair on the tops of their heads, Uncle Harry?"

"Because," said I, pausing long enough to shake Toddie for trying to get my watch out of my pocket, "because they have had bad little boys to bother them all the time, so their hair drops out."

"I dess my hairs is a-goin' to drop out pitty soon, then," remarked Toddie, with an injured air.

"Harness the horses, Mike," I shouted.

"And the goat, too," added Budge.

Five minutes later I was seated in the carriage, or rather in Tom's two-seated open waggon.

"Mike," I shouted, "I forgot to tell Maggie to have some lunch ready for the folks when they get here—run, tell her quick, won't you?"

"Oye, oye, sur," said Mike, and off he went.

"Are you all ready, boys!" I asked.

"In a minute," said Budge; "soon as I fix this. Now," he continued, getting into his seat, and taking the reins and whip, "go ahead."

"Wait a moment, Budge—put down that whip, and don't touch the goat with it once on the way. I'm going to drive very slowly—there's plenty of time, and all you need do is to hold your reins."

"All right," said Budge; "but I like to look like mans when I drive."

"You may do that when somebody can run beside you. Now!"

The horses started at a gentle trot, and the goat followed very closely. When within a minute of the station, however, the train swept in. I had intended to be on the platform to meet Tom and Helen, but my watch was evidently slow. I gave the horses the whip, looked behind, and saw the boys were close upon me, and I was so near the platform when I turned my head that nothing but the sharpest of turns saved me from a severe accident. The noble animals saw the danger as quickly as I did, however, and turned in marvellously small space. As they did so, I heard two hard thumps upon the wooden wall of the little station, heard also two frightful howls, saw both my nephews considerably mixed up on the platform, while the driver of the Bloom Park stage growled in my ear—

"What in thunder did you let 'em hitch that goat to your axletree for?"

I looked, and saw the man spoke with just cause. How the goat's head and shoulders had maintained their normal connection during the last minute of my drive, I leave for naturalists to explain. I had no time to meditate on the matter just then, for the train had stopped. Fortunately the children had struck on their heads, and the Lawrence-Burton skull is a marvel of solidity. I set them upon their feet, brushed them clean with my hands, promised them all the candy they could eat for a week, wiped their eyes, and hurried them to the other side of the station. Budge rushed at Tom, exclaiming—

"See my goat, papa!"

Helen opened her arms, and Toddie threw himself into them, sobbing—

"Mamma, shing 'Toddie one boy day!"

THE END.

Fishing Wholesale.

I WAS sitting in my office at the borough police station, one fine night in June—our winter in the colony of Natal.

The races were just over, and our hands had been pretty full of work; for, although Durban, the seaport of the colony, is the most orderly town I have ever chanced to visit, still, on a festive occasion like that, a policeman's duties are generally rather arduous, and night and day were pretty much the same to us.

I was just dozing quietly over a half-written report, when the sergeant on duty brought in a constable who wanted to see me. It was nothing very particular. A fishing boat had drifted up from the Point, and was now lying on the beach.

The constable asked me to send a few of the Kaffirs from the head station, to put it in a safe place, as the owner was a friend of his. Of course I ordered the men to be sent at once; but just as he was leaving the room, he turned, and I saw that there was something else on his mind.

"Well, Jackson, what do you want?" I asked.

"Nothing particular, sir; but I heard you a-talking with a gent here the other night about fishing, and if you would like to have a turn over the Bar, why, my friend Brown—him whose boat is adrift—was a-saying as how he would like to take me out, if you would kindly give leave?"

At once I said he should have a day's leave, for he was a steady, trustworthy man, an old sailor and fisherman from the West of England—most useful in dealing with the crews of the ships of all nations that visited the port.

"But you will come yourself, sir? You are sure to have good sport; and, if this weather holds, the tides will suit the day after to-morrow at three o'clock in the morning."

"All right, Jackson. Sergeant, note constable No. 9 for a day's leave. I think it is about his turn."

"It is, sir."

And so the matter was settled.

After going my rounds on the following night, I returned to my quarters and got all things ready—three good strong lines, a dozen spare hooks tied on gimp and triple gut, a suit of waterproof clothes, bread, beef, and beer, not forgetting a flask of old rum. Then at one a.m., after swallowing a cup of hot coffee, I loaded two Kaffirs with my impedimenta, and, mounting my horse, rode off to the Point, two miles off, where the ships discharged their cargoes when in port, and where the fishing boat lay.

The moon was high, and the white sandy road lay distinct and clear, intersecting the dark bush that hemmed it in on either side. Not a sound to be heard but the cry of the wild fowl feeding on the mud flats in the bay, and the low of some ox, tied to the "treck tow" of a sugar waggon, waiting impatiently until the lazy forelooper should drive it out to the grazing lands before the morning sun arose. At the Point, Jackson was in readiness.

"Up to time, sir. Here is the boat, so jump on board. You had better put on your waterproofs, as there is a nasty sea coming in over the bar, and you won't like to be battered down; however, it will be smooth enough outside."

Sending the horse back home by the Kaffirs, I jumped on board the boat lying at the jetty. She was about 15 tons—one of the fleet used for crossing the bar to unload cargo from vessels at anchor in the roadstead—cutter-rigged, with a sharp bow and stern. Brown took the tiller, while Jackson and I made ourselves snug in the little cockpit. Two other Europeans and a Lascar formed the crew.

Away we glided across the mouth of the fair wide bay; the slumbering town in the distance glistened white under the moon's rays against the dark bush-covered hill. We had a fair wind out, but there was a heavy easterly swell running in that sent a couple of rollers over us, and, unaccustomed for several years to the motion, I began to wish that I had not come. But once clear of the breakwater in process of formation, the long seas, sweeping with a gradual motion, rose the boat so smoothly that all my qualms died away, and when we came to anchor, six miles or so out to sea, I felt fit for anything.

The sun was just rising, and the golden light in the east contrasted well with the dark background of the land. Bush-covered hills rose in terraces from the long line of the sandy beach, broken only by the Bluff, that, with its white lighthouse crowning its steep cliff, stood boldly out into the ocean.

While sailing out we had hastily made our break-

fast off the provisions I had brought, and then, when the anchor had been let go, baiting the lines with squid and strips of mullet, we hove them overboard. They had hardly touched the bottom—about twenty fathoms, as well as I can remember—when every one on board was hauling in as fast as he could. Garric, silver fish, grunTERS, rock cod, came up as quickly as we could bait, with many others whose names I do not know.

It was hard work tending the lines, and I have never seen anything like it in my fishing experiences, though I have had some pretty good sport about the world; but it was almost too tiring to be called sport. It was simply strike, pull, gaff, and bait again.

For half an hour it was pleasant enough, but then it got wearisome, at least for me; for the others—who hoped to make a good thing of their morning's fishing, since it was not every day that boats could cross the bar, and, even if they did, could anchor in such smooth water—worked like wire-drawers, as the saying is.

Jackson, my steady policeman, had got as excited as the others, and looked at me with surprise when I stopped fishing for a few minutes to open a bottle of beer and light a pipe; however, none were averse to a glass of Bass. That over, at it we went again, until the hold of the little vessel was a mass of glittering fish; and the bait we had brought being all used up, the Lascar was kept hard at work cutting "lashes" from the brightest of them.

"Now, captain, did not I promise you a good morning's sport?" said Jackson, while hauling vigorously. "Gaff him, sir, gaff him!"

And so I did, and a great white-bellied fish, some 15 lb. in weight, came in, after nearly dragging me overboard.

"That's a fine one, and you shall have it, sir—the best eating of any on the coast. Talk about your Cape salmon! They can't hold a candle to it!"

And so it was. Though I have stupidly forgotten its name, I can remember its excellence. It was something of the shape of a turbot, with a black back and creamy white under-side, not common off Natal.

Suddenly the Lascar, who had been sitting quietly in the bow, gave a shout; and looking up, I saw his line, that was coiled away on the fore-peak, flying out of the boat, and that of the man who sat next to him following its example.

"A sherk!" said Brown, sententiously. "I knowed we'd come across one of them critters before we was done. Don't let all your line go, Sawmy; and you, Bill, don't sit staring, but ease him off handsomely, if ye want to save your line."

They did so, and at last the fish, apparently having changed his plan of operations, made a rush towards the boat, while they hauled in the slack as fast as they could. At last, looking over, I saw a long, greyish mass, indistinct from its depth in the clear water.

"What are you going to do, Brown? You surely won't try and get that beggar on board?"

"Catch him, sar!" shouted Sawmy, "he very good fish; salt him, coolie man like him plenty."

"Catch him alive O yourself, Sawmy!" laughed Brown; "you and Bill are pardners."

I am afraid Bill made use of several words not commonly mentioned in good society.

"What do I want of him? he's spoilt my fishing; there he goes again!"

And away he did go, snapping, as if they had been thread, the two lines, that somehow in the hauling had got hitched on board the boat. So, beyond the generally received idea that it must be a "sherk," we were no wiser than before.

Again all set to work hauling in fish, but not so fast as before this little incident.

How long the work would have gone on I am sure I don't know; but that the wind, which had been westerly, shifted of a sudden to the east, sending in a nasty tumbling sea. So Brown, after looking out several times to windward, where an ugly bank of clouds was rising fast, with a sigh at last gave the orders to reel up and make for the harbour. This was done, and, with a fair wind, again we swept over the long rollers, some of which were now breaking on the bar.

The mail steamer had arrived while we were fishing, and followed us in, rising over the waves until her fore foot stood almost clear out of the water, the hissing seas sweeping along her lofty sides, and, so it seemed to us, curling over her deck. Our little craft went lightly above them, and I did not again experience the unpleasant sensations I had felt when crossing in the morning.

Out on Business.

CHAPTER I.

NOAH BLOSBERG'S right foot was swathed in yard upon yard of linen bandages, and over all, was a thick, red-and-black woollen shawl. Moreover, Noah Blosburg's right foot was lying in two cushioned chairs, while Noah Blosburg himself occupied another chair, also cushioned.

Sitting or lounging on the sofa, just ten feet from Noah Blosburg's right foot, was Timothy Blosburg, otherwise known as Tim Blosburg, Young Blosburg, Lawyer Blosburg, and Noah Blosburg's nephew. He had dropped in to see how the right foot was getting on.

"Plaguy uncomfortable, Tim," said the old gentleman, with a look that asked for sympathy. "And what makes it worse, Tim, the left one begins to twinge. I sha'n't get out of this for a month yet."

"Oh, yes, uncle," said Tim, looking over at the red-and-black bundle, as though he were calculating the probable number of chairs Mr. Blosburg would need if the other foot didn't stop its twinging. "This weather will soon be over, and then you will come out all right."

"If that is your—oh-h-h—candid opinion, Tim—oo-oo-ugh!"

"Which foot, uncle?"

"Right one!—ugh!—if that's your opinion, Tim, I'll set it at two months—oo-oo-oooo-ugh!—for you never did come nearer than that on a guess—ugh! Confound the foot! There, it's better now."

"I am heartily glad of it," said Tim, much re-

lieved; for his agony at the sight of his uncle's horrid faces was scarcely less acute than Noah Blosburg's rheumatic misery. "But, as I cannot do you any good, I will go—"

"No, you won't!"—Mr. Blosburg's manner sometimes approached abruptness—"I've got business for you."

Tim settled back on the sofa quite contentedly. It was not often that Noah Blosburg had business for Tim, and the young man thought he could see a good fee in prospect.

"Now, if those plaguy twinges will stay away while I tell you," said Mr. Blosburg, with little faith. "You see, Tim, we had a good customer out West—a plaguy good one he was, too, until he died—"

"No blame attached to him for dying, uncle?"

"No, Tim; but he left his affairs slightly mixed, I fear. His daughter—his name was James Merton—"

"His daughter?"

"There, there, boy. His daughter wrote to me to come out—old friends, you know—but this dreadful rheumatism is on me, and I want you to go for me."

"I don't believe I have the least objection," said Tim, languidly. "Well off, uncle?"

"Snug property, boy."

"Good-looking?"

"What on earth!—Are you talking about the girl?"

"Certainly. I believe you said that Mr. Merton died?"

"Yes, I did!"—quite short—"but I want you to understand that it is the business which needs looking after—not the girl."

"I certainly hope to find the girl all right," remarked Tim.

"All right! of course she is. But, as I was saying, Merton's partner is giving Myra some trouble."

"Myra? Who is Myra?"

"Why, the girl. As I was saying, Myra being alone—"

"Where's her mother?"

"Dead, Tim, years ago. More's the pity; for, if there ever was a nice woman, she was one. But, as I was saying, Myra being all alone, Fenton—that's Merton's partner—is having everything all his own way; and I want you to go out and tell him what is what. Can you do it, Tim?"

A servant with a letter interrupted him; and the reading of the missive drove all previous thoughts from his mind.

"Tim, there's no time to waste," said Mr. Blosburg, quite anxiously. "It is from Myra. Here, read it."

Tim cast his eyes over the letter, and became interested. It was very brief.

"MR. NOAH BLOSBURG.

"DEAR SIR—I am in trouble. I fear that Mr. Fenton is a villain. Please come out, if only for a day, for I cannot trust anybody else.

"MYRA MERTON."

"Well, Tim—"

"I'll take the next train, uncle."

CHAPTER II.

THE residence of the late James Merton was situated on an eminence, about a mile from a thriving Western village—perhaps we should say city—on the banks of the Missouri.

One day, several weeks after the death of her father, Myra sat in her favourite seat by an old, white-limbed sycamore. It was nearly sunset; still she lingered, loth to leave the loved spot.

Yet she lingered—lingered too long, for a long shadow fell across the leafy ground just before her—Wayne Fenton's shadow.

"A beautiful sunset, Myra," said Fenton, in soft, measured tones, as he approached her.

"I have watched it too long already," said Myra, striving to speak calmly.

"Stay, Myra," said he, with a detaining gesture. "I came here to find you. You remember our conversation of yesterday?"

"I do," she coldly answered; "and I hope it will not be repeated."

"That rests partly with you," he said; "for I must make the same demands I made yesterday. I want those papers. They are absolutely necessary to my welfare, and yours. I can do nothing without them. It will ruin my business, and fall heavily upon you. Can I have them, Myra?"

"You cannot have them, Mr. Fenton," she firmly replied. "I have written to Mr. Noah Blosburg, and when he comes I shall be guided by his advice. Until then I hold everything."

She sought to pass him, but he rudely caught her arm.

"Not so fast, Myra. I have tried gentle means, and failed. Now I shall try something else. Here, Dick, I want you!"

At this command, a man stepped out of the bushes and grasped Myra's other arm. She shrieked, but Fenton soon closed her mouth. They dragged her, half fainting, to the river, where a boat was drawn up on the sand. Into this they lifted her, and, while Fenton held her, his accomplice pushed off, and paddled down the stream.

About four miles below, the boat was run to land. The two men helped Myra out, and led her to a rough cabin, thirty or forty rods from the river.

"Hark—hark!" whispered Dick.

Both men sprang to their feet, and drew their revolvers. A step outside had alarmed them.

"Take her back into the corner, and I will see who it is," said Dick.

The man lit his lantern, and stepped to the door. Just as he put his hand to the wooden latch, there came a rap on the door.

"What do you want out there?" shouted Dick.

"Well, I did think I would stop with you to-night; but I've changed my mind. Good night, sir."

"Hold on! Who be you?" cried Dick, hastily opening the door, and holding the lantern so that the light fell upon the face of the tall, well-dressed stranger.

Dick only gave one look, and exclaimed—

"I swear it's Jack Hague, or my name aint Dick Rocher. Hurrah!"

"Dick Rocher or I'm a liar!" he exclaimed, after

a furtive glance into the cabin. "What the deuce brought you out to this hole?"

"What are you here for?" returned Dick, with a grin and a wink. "Come, let's go in."

"That's just what I've been waiting for you to say," said the new-arrival, as he followed Dick into the hut. "Live here alone, old chap?"

"Mostly; but I've got company to-night. Mr. Fenton, allow me to introduce my friend and pal, Mr. Jack Hague;" adding, in a low tone, "he's all right, Fenton; he's one of us."

"Happy to see you, Fenton," said Mr. Jack Hague, carelessly extending his hand to Wayne Fenton. "Deuced hole you've got here, though, Dick—"

And Jack inclined his head toward Myra.

"Ha, ha, ha! Old Jack, you must excuse me. Miss Myra Merton, my very esteemed friend, Jack Hague, the celebrated champion cracksman."

"So pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Merton; but deuced sorry to meet you in such a confounded place as this. You are deucedly handsome."

The hot blood mounted to Myra's face and neck; but she deigned no reply.

At length Dick arose, and went to the table with Jack.

"Which way are you travelling, Jack?"

"Well, Dick, I'm rustivating. It was growing pretty warm back there, so I lit out. It don't matter much which way I go, so it's cool."

"You don't want to take a hand in with us, Jack?"

"Not to-night, old boy. The fact is, they followed me pretty close, and I'm fagged."

"But you wouldn't mind doing me a good turn?"

"Out with it, Dick."

"Well, Jack, Fenton and I are up to a little business. It will take us both to do it—safe business, you know. We've got the gal on our hands, and we wants you to keep an eye on her while we are gone."

"Well, I might, Dick. I've done worse jobs. When do you go?"

"Right off. Just as soon as we can get ready."

Mr. Hague drew a stool to the window, elevated his heels to a level with the sill, took a cigar-case from his pocket, and passed it to Fenton and Dick.

"Back by three," said Dick, while Fenton pushed on toward the river.

Mr. Jack Hague sat by the window watching the light, until he knew, by the distance and motion, that the two men were in the boat, and rowing up the river. Then he threw away his cigar, and went over to where Myra sat, bowed down with grief and despair.

"Miss Merton!"

She suddenly raised her eyes to his face, for the sound of his voice was so different.

"We have no time to waste in words," he went on; "yet I must ask your pardon for my seeming rudeness. I am your friend. That miserable wretch calling himself Dick Rocher detected in my face some real or fancied resemblance to one Jack Hague. My name is Timothy Blossburg."

"Blossburg!" exclaimed Myra, joyfully.

"Noah Blossburg is my uncle. He was confined to his room, and I came on instead."

"Oh, I could not believe you to be one of them," exclaimed Myra.

"I am well repaid by this opportunity to serve you," was Tim's reply. "But we must be going. Do you know what safe they have designs upon?"

"My father's. There are some papers in it which Fenton wants. Is there time to prevent it?"

"I think I can reach the village before they do, for they have the current against them."

Twenty minutes of rapid walking took them out of the woods, and in a short time they reached the main road and a farmhouse.

He then procured a horse, and pushed on to the village, which he reached without mishap.

He lodged his complaint with the authorities, and formed one of the party to surround the Merton mansion. Though he had made good use of his time, he had not been too expeditious; for scarcely were the men posted about the house, when the two rascals came creeping up from the river. They were allowed to effect an entrance, and then their capture was an easy matter.

Tim found his hands full. Wayne Fenton, Esq., had got the affairs of Merton & Fenton "slightly mixed;" but, as Myra was willing to share Tim's labours, he found it no unpleasant task, and settled down to it with becoming fortitude.

CHAPTER III.

NOAH BLOSSBURG waited quite impatiently for Tim's first letter. It came at last, and it was brief, but to the point:—

"DEAR UNCLE—Arrived safe. Have told Fenton 'what is what.' Am now helping Myra to straighten matters. How is the foot?—Yours,

"TIM B."

"Helping Myra?" muttered Noah, glancing at the red-and-black bundle on the end of his right leg. "I don't quite like that, but I guess it's all right—perhaps."

Another letter arrived during the following week. Noah Blossburg opened it with some trepidation.

"DEAR UNCLE—Progressing finely. Fenton did not like his prison quarters, and attempted to escape. Guard shot him down, and that's the end of him. Still helping Myra. Take a long time. How's the foot?—Yours,

"TIM B."

"Plague take him! I don't like it at all," said Noah. "How's the foot? I do believe he's making game of me."

And again, the next week, another epistle came from Tim:—

"DEAR UNCLE—Getting on first-rate. Take a long time to fix up things as they should be; but I will do it, if it takes a year. So don't worry. Wish I could spare you Myra, but it must not be thought of. How's the foot?—Yours,

"TIM B."

"Drat that boy!" exclaimed Noah. "I wish he would send Myra. If it wasn't for my foot! Plaguy provoking! I suppose Tim is all right, but—I wish my foot was well."

All the while, Tim's letters were coming, coming, coming, and not a bit of comfort in them, until the one that told of Tim's return with Myra.

The letter was delayed, and while Noah Blossburg was reading it Tim and Myra appeared at the door.

"Here we are, uncle," said Tim; "but I'm afraid that right foot of yours has played you another shabby trick."

"Why?" gasped the old gentleman, gazing at Myra, so like what her mother had been.

"Well, uncle, I found out, when about half through out there, that I could not possibly fix up affairs as I thought they ought to be, unless I married Myra. Allow me to introduce my wife."

Seven Keys to a Safe.

"I TELL you what," I said, "I shan't come for the account any more. This makes six times I've called for those four hundred and seventy dollars, and I shall put it in my lawyer's hands."

"No, no; quite rightee you, sabbee. Pay dollar all soon. Call again."

I was reminded of all this by seeing the Chinese ambassadors the other day, and it carried me back to San Francisco, full five years ago, where I was dealing largely in various commodities which were much affected by the Heathen Chinees.

I found them a patient, civil, industrious class of people, ready to bargain and get things as cheaply as possible; but scrupulously honest, and ready to pay with the greatest promptitude as long as I dealt with one man. When I had to do with a partnership concern, it was terrible work.

For instance, I had trusted one firm with goods to the amount of nearly five hundred dollars, and no money was forthcoming.

I bullied my collector terribly, for he always came back with an excuse instead of money, and the same tale, that the firm was perfectly honest and trustworthy, and that the money would be paid.

"Then why don't they pay, Johnson?" I exclaimed.

"I wish you'd give them a call yourself, sir," said Johnson.

And I said I would and did, going to the Hongor Mercantile Company seven times, and always being put off.

It was always the same: they were perfectly willing to pay, and messengers were sent, but to return sometimes with one, sometimes with two, or even three or four men, members of the firm; but while these Chinese Spenlows proffered themselves as ready to pay, there was always an obstacle in the way, in the shape of the absence of that Heathen Chinees, Jorkins.

At last I expressed myself as I have said at the beginning of this story, and was going out of the place when a smiling Chinaman came up to me, and, holding his head on one side, he exclaimed—

"Ingly Hong man, come again a morrow. Payee then all—payee ebbery dollar, oh ciss."

"Well, look here," I said, "I will come in here to-morrow, at eleven o'clock, and shall expect to be paid."

"Oh, ciss, payee all dollar. Give long, big order—lot. Gooddee thousand dollar."

"I'll talk about taking your order, my Chinese friend, when you pay for the last," I said, gruffly; and I went away.

"The fellow looks honest," I said; "but there's no trusting these foreigners. They take delight in tricking an Englishman or a Melican man, as they call it. Perhaps to-morrow, when I go, they'll all have pulled up stakes, and gone East."

It was with some satisfaction, then, that on reaching their great shed warehouse the next morning, I found Mr. Pigtail, in his long blue gown and bland smile, standing at the door, ready to salute me with a dose of pigeon English which I could hardly understand.

"Well, Mr. Ah Ree," I said, as I followed him into the bale-crowded warehouse, which certainly looked as prosperous as the great iron safe in the corner was substantial—"well, Mr. Ah Ree, I hope you are prepared to pay my account this morning?"

"Ciss, ciss—readee payee," he said.

And, placing a wicker chair for me, he went off and despatched a couple of messengers, with urgent orders given in his barbarian tongue to each.

This looked bad, for it was only a repetition of the tactics followed on former occasions—tactics which always resulted in a put-off.

I looked terribly gruff; but Mr. Ah Ree, who was the senior partner, smiled and rubbed his hands as he beckoned me to follow him into the farther parts of the warehouse, and then showed me specimens of silk and samples of tea, with coarse Chinese pottery.

"Well," I said to myself, growing a little more easy in my mind, "there's plenty to seize, at all events."

The result was that, after my bland friend had talked to me for about a quarter of an hour, I booked a thousand dollar order for what an Englishman would call sundries.

"There," I said, closing my book with a slap, "this order shall be executed as soon as your last account is settled."

"Ciss, ciss—payee allee dollee," he said, smiling, and pointing to a seat.

Meanwhile, by slow degrees, five respectable-looking Chinamen had come into the warehouse or store; and they came round me, smiling and talking in a bland, smooth way.

"You mean mischief," I said to myself; and my hand went involuntarily to my pocket, where, in accordance with San Francisco customs, I carried a revolver. "You mean to get rid of me and your debt together, eh, my friends? Very good; but if you do, I'll take one of you with me by way of receipt."

I suppose my face did not betray what I felt, for they closed round me in the calmest manner, making excuses, and asking me to be patient a little longer, for their messengers were out, as I understood them, to collect the amount I needed.

It seemed to me that they were getting me farther and farther from the door into the gloomy obscurity of the warehouse, under the pretence of showing me fresh goods; till at last I felt that the time for action had come. In fact, one of the biggest of the party

whispered something to his companions; and I seized my revolver, and was about to draw it as a fresh Chinaman entered the building, and they hurried to meet him with a look of relief.

"Lucky for some of you, my friends," I said, drawing a breath of relief, and following them towards the door, meaning to take the first opportunity that offered, to make a run for it.

To my great surprise, though, Mr. Ah Ree came, and, taking my arm, led me towards the great safe. "Iron coffin, eh?" I said to myself.

"Countee out de dollar," said Mr. Ah Ree.

And the last arrival of his six companions went up to the safe, placed a key in a hole, and turned it.

Then a second did so with another key in another hole, and so on, till six had unlocked six locks of the great safe, when Mr. Ah Ree took out a similar key to his companions and went up to the safe, smiling, as he said to me—

"Great Hong Company—poor Chinamen. Big safe—big dollar. Seben partnee take seben key, open, get de dollar."

As he spoke, he unlocked the safe, and turned the door on its massive hinges, and then, pulling out a drawer, he drew forth a bag marked 470—the amount in dollars of my account—and handed the bag to me.

"No trustee no man," he said, smiling, as he shut and locked the door, his six partners locking it in turn. "No trustee once mans; all come at once, open door—all right."

From which I understood that, as in our trading communities, two or three, or even four partners have to sign a cheque to make it negotiable, my seven Chinese friends, all partners in their Hong or trading community, could make no payment without every man was present to help unlock the treasure safe.

I laughed at their plan, for the heavy dollar bag made me feel in a very good temper. They laughed too, and shook hands very warmly, after the English fashion, as I took my departure.

"No once man run away all dollar," he said, laughing.

"I see," I said, laughing. "You shall have your goods in soon."

I sent them; and for a long while after the Hong of Ah Ree and I did a good deal of business; but it always took seven keys afterwards when I wanted money to open that safe.

"MIKE, can you account for the extraordinary curve in this horse's back?" "Sure, an' I can, sir. Before the baste was your property, she was backed agin an Irish horse, who bate her all hollow, and she never got straight since."

MAKE sense out of this: Lord Palmerston then entered on his head, a white hat upon his feet, large and well-polished boots upon his brow, a dark cloud in his hand, his faithful walking stick in his eye, a menacing glare saying nothing.

A TRAVELLING showman announces that he will be in town in a few days, when he will exhibit, among other curious and interesting objects, a speaking trumpet, a walking stick, a pair of dancing pumps, and several shooting boots.

A Yankee Compensation Case.

A HORNY-HANDED old farmer entered the offices of one of the railroad companies, and inquired for the man who settled for hosses which was killed by locomotives. They referred him to the company's counsel, whom, having found, he thus addressed:—

"Mister, I was driving home one evening last week—"

"Been drinking?" sententiously questioned the lawyer.

"I'm centre pole of the local Tent of Rechabites," said the farmer.

"That doesn't answer my question," replied the man of law; "I saw a man who was drunk vote the prohibition ticket last year."

"Hadh't tasted liquor since the big flood of 1846," said the old man.

"Go ahead."

"I will, 'Squire. And when I came to the crossing of your line—it was pretty dark, and—zip! along came your train, no bells rung, no whistles tooted, contrary to the statutes in such cases made and provided, and—whoop! away went my off-hoss over the telegraph wires. When I had dug myself out'n a swamp some distance off and pacified the other critter, I found that thar off-hoss was dead, nothing valuable about him but his shoes, which mout have brought, say, a penny for old iron. Well—"

"Well, you want pay for that 'ere off-hoss?" said the lawyer, with a scarcely repressed sneer.

"I should, you see," replied the farmer frankly; "and I don't care about going to law about it, though possibly I'd get a verdict, for juries out in our town is mostly made up of farmers, and they help each other as a matter of principle in these cases of stock killed by railroads."

"And this 'ere off-hoss," said the counsel, mockingly, "was well bred, wasn't he? He was rising four years, as he had been for several seasons past. And you had been offered £500 for him the day he was killed, but wouldn't take it because you were going to win all the prizes in the next race with him? Oh, I've heard of that off-hoss before."

"I guess there's a mistake somewhere," said the old farmer, with an air of surprise; "my hoss was got by old man Butt's roan-pacing hoss, Pride of Lemont, out'n a wall-eyed no account mare of my own, and, now that he's dead, I may say that he was twenty-nine next grass. Trot? Why, Fred Erby's hoss that he was fined for furious driving of was old Dexter alongside of him! Five hundred pounds! Bless your soul, do you think I'm a fool, or anyone else? It is true I was made an offer for him the last time I was in town, and, for the man looked kinder simple, and you know how it is yourself with hoss trading, I asked the cuss mor'n the animal might have been worth. I asked him forty pounds, but I'd have taken thirty."

"Forty?" gasped the lawyer; "forty?"

"Yes," replied the farmer, meekly and apologetically; "it kinder looks a big sum, I know, for an old hoss; but that ere off-hoss could pull a mighty good load, considering. Then I was kinder shook up,

and the pole of my waggon was busted, and I had to get the harness fixed, and there's my loss of time, and all that counts. Say fifty pounds, and it's about square."

The lawyer whispered softly to himself, "Well, I'll be hanged!" and filled out a cheque for fifty pounds.

"Sir," said he, covering the old man's hand, "you are the first honest man I have met in the course of a legal experience of twenty-three years; the first farmer whose dead horse was worth less than a thousand pounds, and could trot better without training. Here, also, is a free pass for yourself and your male heirs in a direct line for three generations; and if you have a young boy to spare we will teach him telegraphing, and find him steady and lucrative employment."

The honest old farmer took the cheque, and departed, smiting his horny leg with his brawny hand in triumph as he did so, with the remark—

"I knew I'd ketch him on the honest tack! Last hoss I had killed I swore was a trotter, and all I got was thirty pounds and interest. Honesty is the best policy."

A Story-Teller's Dilemma.

MR. HYPHEN was at a dinner party given a few days ago at Boddley's. While the company were at the table Hyphen said, in a loud voice—

"By-the-way, did you hear that good thing the other day about the woman over in Pencader? It was one of the most amusing things that ever came under my observation. The woman's name, you see, was Emma. Well, sir, there were two young fellows paying attention to her, and after she'd accepted one of them the other also proposed to her, and as she felt certain that the first one wasn't in earnest, she accepted the second one too. So a few days later both of 'em called at the same time, both claimed her hand, and both insisted on marrying her at once. Then of course she found herself face to face with a mighty unpleasant—unpleasant—er—er—er—let's see, what's the word I want? Unpleasant—er—er—dear me, if I haven't forgotten that word."

"Predicament," suggested Boddley.

"No, that's not it. What's the name of that thing with two horns? Unpleasant—er—er; hang it, it's gone clear out of my mind."

"A cow," hinted Miss Gridley.

"No, not a cow."

"Maybe it's a buffalo," remarked Dr. Potts.

"No, no kind of an animal. Something else with two horns. Very strange that I can't recall it."

"Perhaps it's a brass band," observed Butterwick.

"Of course not."

"You don't mean a stage coach?" asked Mrs. Boddley.

"N—no. That's the queerest thing I ever heard of, that I can't remember that word," said Mr. Hyphen, getting warm and beginning to feel miserable.

"Well, give the rest of the story without it," said Boddley.

"That's the mischief of it," said Mr. Hyphen; "the whole joke turns on that word."

"Two horns, did you say?" asked Dr. Potts.

"Maybe it's a lobster."

"Or a snail?" remarked the judge.

"No—no—none of those."

"Is it an elephant or a walrus?" asked Mrs. Potts.

"I shall have to give it up," said Mr. Hyphen, wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Well, that's the poorest old story ever I run across," remarked Butterwick to Boddley.

Then everybody smiled, and Mr. Hyphen excused himself extremely lamely.

The mystery is yet unsolved. We never met with such a story as that; and we have an impression that Hyphen was trying to build up one by trying to bring the woman's name, Emma, somehow into a pun with the word "dilemma."

We are glad he failed. A man who will undertake to palm off such jokes as this can be spared from society without anybody experiencing a sense of loss.

A Scientific Job.

SOME time since a stranger arrived in Detroit in order to consult from one to a dozen surgeons about his tongue, that useful member being hampered with a cancer.

The doctors took a look at the tongue, shook their heads, and said, "hum—hum." Gathered in solemn council, they agreed that the tongue must come off, or at least about a third of it. They assured the man that they could make a very neat and scientific job of it, and once his tongue got well they could splice it, as sailors splice a rope, and give him as much tongue and as much talk as ever.

The patient consented, and the new tongue was in operation, the other day, for the first time.

The surgeons were jubilant, and they invited our reporter to call around and see the job. He went. He found the patient sitting up, looking pretty fair, and willing to give all the information he had about him.

"What is your name?" asked the reporter.

"Wholl loll roll loll," was the prompt reply.

"Where do you belong?"

"Illy lolly bloll, rolly doll," he replied.

One of the surgeons stood by, and he clapped his hands with glee, and shouted—

"See here! Why, that man talks as plainly as you or I! I tell you, it was the neatest scientific job of surgery ever done in this town."

After a brief discussion with the surgeon on the antiquity and uses and abuses of tongues, the reporter turned to the man, and asked—

"Did it hurt you much?"

"Whilly Twol fol sol," he answered.

"And how do you like this splicing business?"

"Whol flol hil blil lol," he said.

"He feels all right, of course," chuckled the surgeon. "Why, man, he works that tongue equal to a parrot. Show me another such job and I'll give you a thousand dollars."

The reporter asked him if women's tongues were ever afflicted with cancer, and the surgeon replied

that he never heard of a case—they were never at rest long enough for any affliction to take root.

"And you think you can in time manage your artificial tongue, do you?" asked the reporter.

"Ihl plol slal al wohl," answered the man.

"In time!" echoed the surgeon. "Why, you blockhead, isn't he using his tongue now? Can't you understand every word he says?"

The reporter didn't answer, but leaned back and wondered how the splice was effected. He had a dim idea of boiler rivets, shoe-patch cement, water lime, and so forth; and, finally, asked to see the job.

The patient opened his mouth in response to the request, and the surgeon seized the tongue, pulled it this way and that, moved it up and down, and exclaimed—

"Nicest job ever exhibited in the profession. I call it the invisible splice; but you can see the junction right along there. The new part is a composition known only to me, and I can't betray the secret."

"Well, I wish you speedy recovery," remarked the reporter, as he rose to go.

"Glol plol ohl," replied the man, smiling blandly.

"Good-bye."

"Glol lool," he answered.

"I tell you," said the surgeon, as he came out on the walk, "not one man in ten thousand could have done that job without spoiling the man's speech for ever."

The Egotist's Note-book.

"SIR," said one barrister to another, "I often meet a servant in the morning taking two drinks into your room. Do you always drink in duplicate?"

"Sir," replied the other, "I order two drinks every morning, and when I've drunk one it makes me feel like another man; then, sir, I am bound by courtesy to treat the other man, so I drink the second."

A lady friend, whose mind had just been made happy by success over making jam, was busy the other day, when a low, musical sound came from the closet under the stairs; and the mother listened. It was her little son, softly singing to himself one of Moody and Sankey's hymns. Then she could not forbear stepping quietly to the closet-door to catch a glimpse of the "dear child," "precious lamb," "bless his heart." And she saw him—saw him devoutly engaged in humming that revival hymn, and also running his fingers round in a preserve jar. And there the devotions broke up—broke up amid groans of repentance for sin found out.

Coleridge called the publishers cormorants, and Byron profanely altered his copy of the sacred Scriptures thus—"Now, Barabbas was a publisher." This may be considered very funny, but it wants the rare element of truth. A successful book is really an exceptional case—more fail than succeed—and of the two classes the publishers are a much

more respectable class than the authors, who, with a few exceptions, are a hand-to-mouth set of fellows. Genius is not the most desirable quality to possess, and, so far as our own experience goes, the more respectable the author, the duller he is. We need not give instances; they are as plentiful as blackberries.

A learned philosopher says that Adam was the first manufacturer of cider; for when Eve had eaten the apple, Adam, in a fit of tenderness and indignation at her greediness, put his arm round her waist and gave her such a squeeze that it converted the apple into beverage, which he called *insider*—whence the name of cider. This is clever; but I doubt whether it is true.

The following order has been posted at the headquarters of the Middlesex Yeomanry Cavalry at Uxbridge:—"The commanding officer has noticed both last year and again this, that due regard is not paid by members of the regiment to wearing nothing but strictly regimental uniform on parade. He is also informed that certain sergeants in the regiment are in the habit of wearing officers' caps when off parade. He has to desire that this may not be done in future. Officers commanding troops are desired to send off parade any man who does not appear in strictly regimental dress, and this will entail the loss of the day's pay and his being returned absent from parade. The commanding officer, however, is sure that the good sense of the members will enable them to see that the only use of uniform is to procure uniformity, which is impossible if every man wears what is good in his own eyes. He would also point out that any man who makes himself conspicuous by wearing what is virtually a fancy dress makes himself thereby ridiculous in the eyes of others." Any one, from reading this, would think that the dress had something to do with attracting young men into the volunteer forces. But of course it has not.

People should not be too clean, at least when the desire for clean hands causes them to take other people's soap. It has been alleged that an *employé* at the Princess's Theatre has been helping himself to eight penn'orth of Mr. Chatterton's property, though in the evidence it was not stated whether it was mottled or yellow soap. It is to be hoped, for everybody's sake, that the charge will not be sustained. The perquisite question is not a wholesome one at all.

A gentleman writes to the papers to know why it is that lightning-killed bullocks are not dressed and sent up to market as beef, and talks about the prejudice that exists. The reason is that, once animals not killed according to custom are admitted into the market, the door will be opened for the entry of any kind of refuse. Suppose Mr. Giles's cow dies of disease, and the carcase is sent up to town, not as regularly killed meat, but as lightning-stricken! What then? Let us eschew beef.

Those cads in the steam launches are still making themselves a nuisance; but why should we anglers

and pleasure-seekers suffer and submit to risk of being run down when, in these scientific days, we can protect ourselves? For the future, let every angler in his punt lay down at suitable distances a few miniature torpedoes, and then, as to the steam launch people who try to run him down or annoy him, *let them look out!* Who will design a patent pocket torpedo for river use only?

I have penetrated the secret designs of the author and actors of the Vaudeville comedy, now past its 850th night. The plan was self-evident from its name, though this self-evidence, from its plainness, misled. The idea is that the comedy is to go on for the next generation, and so on; hence it is meant for "Our Boys," and called accordingly.

A photograph of a trotting horse has been sent to me from San Francisco, and it is veritably a wonder of the art. It was photographed "in less than the one-thousandth part of a second," and is perfect in its clearness, even the flying dust is plainly shown. But, all the same, the horse is not handsome; he looks as if he were a dummy, and stuffed. By the way, how would the spokes of a wheel look when the horse drawing the trotting car is going thirty-six feet per second—clear, or like a flash of rays? In this photo they are as distinct as if the car stood still.

This is a good story, told by the late Albert Smith. He related how he had called one morning at the post-office of a Swiss hamlet. To his demand for letters for Smith he received a steady denial. Morning after morning the same thing occurred. Letters were denied not only to him, but to a large number of other persons, who, like him, expected them—nay, were confident that they must have arrived. One day, Mr. Smith, hearing the postmaster groaning over the number of letters in his possession, contrived to glance at his stock, and discovered his own missing letters among a heap apparently thrown aside in despair. On his pointing out to the postmaster that the letters were his, and addressing some sharp remonstrance to that functionary, he was met by the point-blank assertion that the letters were not his at all, and that he should not be permitted to seize upon the property of Monsieur Esq., the gentleman who had so many letters sent to him and never came to fetch them, but whose correspondence was yet to be protected until his arrival.

The Chatham and Dover Railway has arranged to deliver at the Alexandra Palace, within twenty-four hours of its collection in Paris, the caravan of Nubian animals now being exhibited at the Jardin d'Acclimation in that city. The collection, which includes seventeen racing dromedaries, eight giraffes, three specimens of the rhinoceros, five elephants, buffaloes, and goats, hunting dogs and ostriches, will be transported under the care of the fourteen Nubian hunters who captured the animals.

Everybody is writing to the papers proposing sites for Cleopatra's Needle, which has not yet ar-

rived. Let me make my proposal. Time back some genius had the Duke of Wellington's statue stuck on the top of one of the arches of Hyde-park corner. Here, then, is an opportunity for another genius to suggest that the Needle should be stuck on the top of Temple Bar, which still stands in its old spot. But it would break it down, some one says. So much the better.

I wish that man who wants six pounds for his breechloader would find a customer, for his advertisements are getting to be a nuisance. Besides, he will soon have spent the above-named amount in advertisements, and then, unless he has several breechloaders instead of one, he will be a loser.

An ox meeting a man on the highway, asked him for a pinch of snuff, whereupon the man fled back along the road in extreme terror.

"Don't be alarmed," said a horse whom he met; "the ox won't bite you."

The man gave one stare, and dashed across the meadows.

"Well," said a sheep, "I wouldn't be afraid of a horse; he won't kick."

The man shot like a comet into the forest.

"Look where you are going, there, or I'll thrash the life out of you!" screamed a bird, into whose nest he had blundered.

Frantic with fear, the man leapt into the sea.

"By Jove, how you frightened me!" said a small shark.

The man was dejected, and felt a sense of injury. He seated himself moodily on the bottom, braced up his chin with his knees, and thought for an hour. Then he beckoned to the fish who had made the last remark.

"See here, I say," said he; "I wish you would just tell me what this all means?"

"Ever read any fables?" asked the shark.

"No—yes—well, the catechism, marriage service, and—"

"Oh, bother!" said the fish, playfully, smiling clean back to the pectoral fins; "get out of this and read your *Æsop*."

This fable teaches that its worthy author was mad when he wrote it.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyl-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER V.

NOW, just about the time of the conversation at the cottage, Alice Vaughan had worked her brother up into the embrasure of the old window in the Hall drawing-room, ostensibly for the purpose of holding a skein of silk, with which she was about to put in the eyes of a most nobly-beaked parrot of gorgeous hue, at present reposing, stretched out upon a tambour frame, and totally blind.

"Now, look sharp," said Colossus to Pigmy. "I'm not going to hold my hands stretched out like this long: I want a pipe. There's the governor under the cedar."

"I won't be long, Steve, dear," said Pigmy the Pretty, coiling a flossy yellow silk band round her brother's hands, and securing him, until she felt disposed to loosen his chains. "Now, hold quite still, there's a good boy; this silk so soon gets entangled."

Stephen very good humouredly leaned back in his chair and "held still," while a piece of square card being produced, his sister found the end, and began to wind her silk. All this while the room was beginning to grow dusky; and Mrs. Vaughan, having laid aside her book, was half napping in an easy chair.

"Dear me," said Alice; "why, we shall hardly see to finish."

"Good job, too," said Stephen, yawning. "Come, leave it till the candles are lit."

"Oh! we must finish this skein," said Alice, "or we shall have it in a tangle."

And then the busy taper little fingers began to be very nimble, unfastening knots and kinks, and pretending to do a great deal, but really making but very little progress.

"I say, Steve, dear," said Pigmy, at last, in the most saccharine of tones—"I say, dear, what was that you said to Maddy yesterday?"

"Hold your tongue, you little fool," said Stephen, abruptly, looking anxiously round at his mother, and nearly ruining the yellow skein.

"How stupid!" exclaimed Alice, impatiently, pushing her brother's hands back into the proper position. "Now, tell me directly, sir; I will know. What was it you were saying to Maddy Glebeley? I am your sister, and I ought to be told. Now, what was it, Stevey?"

"Nothing," said Stephen.

"If you don't tell me," said Alice, in a threatening tone, "I'll ask you, out loud, at supper to-night, before papa and mamma."

And after this dire threat, the silk winding came quite to a standstill.

"No, you won't," said Stephen, coolly.

"Indeed, but I will, sir," said his sister.

"Well, I don't care," said Stephen. "Now, come, get on with this silk, or else I shall throw it all down together."

"Well, then," said Alice, "if you will not tell me, I'll tell you, sir, for I know all about it. You were making love to her, sir—now, then. Now, Steve, it's of no use for you to throw your great feet about

like that, and try to tear my dress. Sit still, sir, and listen to me. Now, I know you proposed to her; and she refused you. Don't—be—so—stupid! See how you are tangling this silk again."

Stephen grumbled audibly, and then the silk winding went on once more, very slowly, and so did Alice's speech.

"Now, I know how it is, Steve: it's all because of Frank Henderson. But, if I were you, I would not be beaten like that."

Stephen here grew a little less restive, and gave a great sigh.

"There, I knew I was right," continued Pigmy. "Now, sit still, like a good boy, for I want to talk to you, and say ever so much about all that, you know; only you are such an old stupid, and will keep fidgeting about so. Now, Steve, tell me directly, sir—was I not right? and didn't you tell Madeline last night that you were—"

"The devil!" ejaculated Stephen, throwing the silk into his sister's lap, and then retreating across the lawn towards where the Squire was sitting, and where the little tormentor soon saw him hard at work fumigating the cedar branches with tobacco smoke.

"I know he did," said Alice, nodding her head, and muttering to herself. "I know he did; and she refused him—a nasty, tiresome, deceitful thing. And him so tall, and so handsome, and so—so—so big; and so—so—so stupid!" she burst out at last. "Ah, if I were a man, I wouldn't be beaten like that. And it might all be so nicely settled, too; and then by-and-by they could both come and live here; and then, if I wished it, Frank could go into the Church, and I dare say we could have the Rectory. It does all fit so nicely. I'm sure I'm better looking than Madeline; and yet he was in a fidget all the time to get away, and it does make me feel so miserable."

Well, it certainly was getting dark, and no one saw Alice's little cheek lean up against the side of the window shutter, and rest there so disconsolately; nor yet the handkerchief come out, in time to catch the two glistening tears which fell upon it. There was no Frank there to kiss them away, and he might easily have done so, for Mrs. Vaughan's nap was sound. But, even if Frank had been there, one feels grave doubts as to whether he would have attempted the duty of removal; while, even if he had, without doubt it would have been in the more effectual, but less romantic, fashion of wiping with the little pocket handkerchief.

"I hate him, I do!" exclaimed Alice, at length, in a pet; "and I won't think about him any more."

And then the little maiden went to the piano, and tried to sing, but the notes would come so mournfully, and everything sounded so sad, that she soon gave that up in despair; and tying a handkerchief over her bonny little head, she sauntered out into the garden, through the open window. Here she was soon busy picking the roses and pulling out the petals to scatter about the lawn, till she came round to where she expected to find the Squire and her brother; but, upon reaching the large garden seat, she found that Stephen was alone, when he directly made room for her beside him.

Alice sat down listlessly.

No sooner was she seated than her brother took hold of her little white hands, and imprisoned them within his own.

"Well, Tartar," said Stephen, after a short silence, during which he had been busy sending clouds on high.

"For shame, Steve," said Alice.

"Well, you know what a little vixen you are," said Stephen; "I'm quite frightened of you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Alice, passionately, "I wish you wouldn't be such a goose."

And then she rose to go, but found herself a prisoner.

"Sit still, little one," said Stephen; "I want to talk to you, you know, about yesterday."

"There's a good boy," said Alice. "Now, do let's have a little quiet chat about it."

"Well," said Stephen, "let's begin. What a nice fellow Frank Henderson is, isn't he?"

"No," said Alice, hurriedly, and half startled at the contrary road the conversation was taking—"No; I hate him."

"No you don't, Titsy," said Steve, "or else you would not have been fit to cry when he laughed at you in the boat. Now, come, little birdie, it's my turn now. I'm the stronger, and I sha'n't let you go; come, now, sit still. I'm stupid, I know; but then I have eyes. And so you're very fond of Frank, are you?"

"I'm sure I'm not; I hate him, I tell you," exclaimed Alice, passionately.

"Just so," said Stephen, coolly; "and so you hang upon his arm, and look up in his face, and like to linger with him under the trees. That's just what people do who hate each other."

"I tell you I do hate him," cried Alice, stamping her little foot, and struggling in vain to free herself. "It's very, *very*, VERY cruel of you to tease me so, Steve; and—and—I—I—"

And poor little Alice burst into a passionate fit of weeping, sobbing so violently that her brother grew alarmed.

"Hush! hush! poor little birdie," he said, in his great elephantine manner, but with all a woman's tenderness, as he drew the little dew-wet flower to his breast, and kissed and fondled her till the sobs ceased, and the eyes grew dry as she nestled up against her stalwart brother, and returned his caresses.

So they sat in silence for some time, watching the great broad-faced moon rise slowly from behind the trees, silvering all around, but as yet leaving the place where they sat in complete shade.

All at once Alice started, for something like a rain-drop fell upon her hand. She made no further movement, however, but only pressed the tighter to her brother.

"Titsy," said Stephen, at last, in a very soft voice, "my poor little girl!"

"Poor Stevey," whispered Alice, nestling closer still.

"Supper!" roared the bluff-voiced Squire, from an open window. "Come, you two," said the old gentleman, as the thoughtful couple entered the room. "What have you been doing?"

"Only talking about yesterday's trip, papa," said Alice—the more self-possessed of the two.

"Well, now, that is provoking," cried the Squire; "I get you two in, and now your mother steps off; and— Oh, here she is."

"I was obliged to give orders, my dear," said comely Mrs. Vaughan, "or we should have had Mr. Phipps put in a damp bed to-morrow."

"Nice boy, very," said the Squire. "Coming to-morrow, is he? Nice row we shall have. Poor little beggar, though; do him good after being steyed up in London. Have something to eat for the poor little chap."

CHAPTER VI.—A MORSEL OF MYSTERY.

FRANK sat that night by his open window listening to the faint indescribable sounds borne on the soft breeze of midnight. He felt sleepless and disturbed in his mind, to settle which disarrangement he came to the determination that he would quietly and calmly think matters over, and this he tried to do every half-hour, and finished by making everything far more chaotic. He wanted to see the road before him clear, and his course straightforward; but somehow or another, he could not get it as he wished, in spite of pipe after pipe, and the attacking of the knotty subject from different sides. If there had been no Stephen Vaughan to keep getting in the way, all would have been tolerably easy; but do what he would, there was his old schoolfellow planting himself as an obstacle, and apparently ready to dispute the way.

Once Frank started, for it seemed that he heard a door close in the lower part of the building; but he detected no further sound, so continued musing, when he was again startled by hearing voices in the lane apparently close at hand.

At first the conversation was carried on in a whisper; but soon the voices were raised, and it seemed evident that the speakers were in dispute, for Frank heard some one say, angrily—

"Taint half enough, I tell you."

"Hsh-sh-sh!" said another. "We shall be overheard."

"Well, and suppose we are?" said the first speaker. "I don't care; it can't hurt me."

"Hush! I tell you," whispered a familiar voice. "Haven't I—"

"No, you haven't!" exclaimed the other, loudly and angrily.

And then Frank leaped to his feet, for there was the sound of a blow, and then a sharp scuffling noise, followed by a half-stifled cry for help.

The window was not high; and the next moment Frank had lowered himself down into the garden, leaped the hedge, and was about to join in the affray, when one of the figures, indistinctly seen in the starlight, seemed suddenly to wrench itself from the other, stand for an instant, and then strike a violent blow, when Frank rushed in, just time enough to catch a man tottering from a stroke apparently heavy enough to have felled a bullock.

To lay the poor fellow upon the ground was the work of a moment, and then Frank darted off in pursuit of the retreating figure, whose steps he could hear rapidly beating the hard road; but, as soon as the

fellow made the discovery that he was being pursued, he rushed through the hedge and took to the fields; then, with his pursuer hotly in chase, made for a low copse about a couple of hundred yards further on; but Frank was fleet of foot, and getting warm with the excitement, though he had not stayed to ask himself why he was trying to make a capture, so he bounded on, and as the dim figure dashed into the sparse underwood, it was with his pursuer close behind him. He had evidently meant this as a place of sanctuary, but there was no rest here; and directly after, at a much slower pace, pursuer and pursued were again out in the open, and making their way across the meadows towards the river.

"I shall have him now," muttered Frank, breathlessly. "I shall soon know him if I get close up."

But just then the figure made a double on finding itself in a curve of the river, and tried to dart back; but Frank, though breathed, was too quick for him, and had him by the arm; but only for an instant, for there was a sharp struggle, followed by a heavy fall and a splash, when Frank slowly gathered himself up to see his late adversary crawling out of the river on the far side, when he plunged into the darkness, and was gone.

"What a fool I am!" muttered Frank, as he turned slowly away in the direction of the cottage. "But then that surely was Elton in difficulties; what in the world though could he have been doing out there with this fellow?"

He could find plenty of similar questions, but no answers to them. However, the sharp run and the excitement had done him good; and if he could have had the satisfaction of leading back a prisoner, Frank would have been on very comfortable terms with himself. But then he had been overthrown; and therefore it was not with feelings of the most unalloyed pleasure that he returned to the lane to aid the fallen man.

However there was no help needed. The fallen man was gone; and Frank walked round to the back of the cottage, and tried the door.

Fast!

He then went round to the front, but that was also secured, and further inspection showed no sign of light or moving inmate; so he went to an out-house, and secured the assistance of a short ladder, with which he reached his bed-room, and drew the light steps up after him.

"It's strange," muttered Frank to himself, as he returned from listening at his bed-room door. "And yet I could not have made a mistake. It must have been Elton. It was his voice, too. Proved by eyes and ears."

But as all his musing seemed only to mystify him further, Frank began to think of bed, but determined to have one more pipe to settle him after the late run; so he sat down again by the window, and once more tried to make out who the parties could have been. Could it have been any friend of Sampson's? Yes, that was quite possible; but then, who were Sampson's friends? No one knew anything of him, nor yet of his antecedents—points upon which he was always most jealously reserved. He had been now for many years in the village; but no one knew

from whence he came, neither had he ever talked of his relatives.

"If he would only have kept away altogether!" growled Frank, as he thought of his poor weak mother, and the life she led; of the harsh behaviour towards himself until he grew old enough to maintain his own position; and, above all, of the shadow the sour-tempered miller had cast by his presence over a happy home. Then came visions of early life and happiness, followed by much bitterness; of the times when his blood had almost boiled on witnessing the cutting treatment to which his mother was subjected; and then came again that unanswerable question—"What could she have seen in him?"

Frank could not make it out; but the solution was simple enough. Mrs. Elton had been left a widow, with a large business, superintended by a keen foreman; and that keen foreman had thought how advantageous it would be to change from servant to master. It was only a matter of time and careful siege; so Sampson sat himself down before the fortress, and in due time carried it, thoroughly revenging himself afterwards for every imaginary slight of the past, and carefully visiting upon the heads of those at home the unpleasanties he met with from the late Mr. Henderson's connections, very few of whom glanced with an eye of favour upon the miller.

Sampson presented himself at breakfast next morning with his low, black, bristle-crowned forehead embellished with a dirty, greeny-yellow bump just in front. It was evidently painful, for he had been out and about, and his hat had been fretting it. But in reply to Frank's query as to whether he was much hurt, he returned a look of the greatest surprise and wonder.

"I said I hoped you were not hurt, sir," said Frank.

"Hurt?" said Sampson—"where?"

"Why, your forehead, sir," said Frank. "That scoun—"

"There, get on with your breakfast," growled Sampson; "and, as I don't interfere with your affairs, let mine rest. I should have thought any fool could have seen I had a bad boil coming."

The allusion to a human being given to folly was so plain, that Frank, who prided himself on certain gentlemanly feelings, retired within his shell metaphorically, and took no further notice of the head of the family, who growled over his breakfast for a while, and then departed. But Frank thought none the less. Upon waking that morning he had felt in doubt respecting the strange affair of the past night, thinking that he might have been mistaken as to identity; but the plain mark of the heavy blow he had seen delivered, put doubt to flight at once.

"Whatever can it mean?" mused Frank. "He evidently was there, and now wants to hush it up. So strange, too. To suffer such a blow as that from a fellow to whom he was giving an interview in the middle of the night. There must be some mystery attached to it."

But, somehow or another, Frank Henderson was not in a mystery-loving humour; for, do what he would, other thoughts would keep rising. He took up a book and pretended to study; he tried to write;

began a mathematical problem; it was all the same: either Madeline Glebeley or Stephen Vaughan took possession of the mental field of sight, and the advance made in anything relating to college was very small.

CHAPTER VII.—A DAY WITH THE SCALES.

TOM PHIPPS has been quoted here as an authority, but has not yet made his appearance in this life drama. He was as a man much what he had been as a boy: very small in body, and very large in soul. It was only little Tom Phipps, of Edgeton High School, magnified. To look at, Tom was one of the most comical little fellows imaginable; while the most striking piece of comicality about him, and the one which gave an irresistible tone to the whole, was the fact of his utter innocence—his complete guilelessness of there being anything amusing in his appearance. He was neither plain nor handsome; but something like what a good-looking imp might be supposed to have become, if adopted by reputable parents and properly brought up. He stood just five feet high; was pudgy, not to say fat; possessed not a scrap of beard upon the smooth, round face he so carefully shaved; had a pair of merry twinkling eyes, a little cocky nose; fair, curly hair, and a temperament of the most satisfactory kind imaginable. Tom was never known to be out of humour. As a boy, when thrashed at school, which was at least once a week—for he never by any chance knew a lesson—he cried with one eye and laughed with the other; he never quarrelled or made himself unpleasant, but seemed to get on as if composed of India-rubber, so elastic that he could collapse, or stretch, or accommodate himself to any position or circumstance.

True to his appointment, Tom Phipps came down by the mail train to Ramsford, the market town, where he was met by Stephen Vaughan, who had driven over in company with Frank, both of whom worked hard all the way to seem perfectly at their ease, and each to show the other that he had nothing whatever upon his mind, and, of course, most unsuccessfully; and, at last, Frank began to wish the arrangements that had been made, void and of none effect. For a fishing trip was settled for the following day; Frank was to stay a night or two at the Hall; and when they reached the station, there stood Tom, armed with a bundle of fishing rods, strapped together like the fascine of a Roman lictor; while his other impedimenta consisted of a gaily-patterned carpet bag, long and very shallow—whose contents were evidently cricketing tools—and a very small black valise, upon the top being strapped a railway rug composed of raccoon skins, lined with scarlet cloth. As for the traveller, he was got up in the first style of fashion—that is to say, in the ugliest suit of tweed that Bond or Regent Street could produce.

"Hullo, my Trojans!" he shouted, shaking Frank's arm nearly off, and then seizing Stephen's hand, and shaking himself, for he made but little impression upon the giant. "How wags Waveley? How's the Squire? And how is my dear friend, Mr. Sampson Elton? I long to embrace him, and kiss him on

both cheeks. Been to Paris, and learned the happy customs of the sunny city."

"Well, you can tell us all that as you go along," said Stephen. "Put the luggage in the dog-cart, porter. Come along, Tom."

"Whom do you call Long Tom, atomy?" said the little fellow, puffing out his cheeks.

"There, get on," exclaimed Frank, who did not admire scenes in the circle, when that circle was composed of admiring bystanders, in the shape of railway porters, pointsmen, and passengers. "Come, jump up, Tom."

And Tom was very soon in the dog-cart beside Stephen, and wanting to drive—a favour, however, which was not accorded to him.

Frank mounted behind, and the three friends were soon tearing over the road, at a pace which brought out many an old woman's head, to shake and utter dismal forebodings; but apparently greatly to the delight of the Squire's little Irish mare, which, untouched by whip, answered every chirrup with corresponding tosses of head and tail, and by breaking into a springy gallop.

Upon reaching the Hall, Tom seemed quite taken aback, in the midst of the hearty welcomes he received, by the vision of the fair Alice, whom he had not seen for nearly two years, on account of educational arrangements. The first thing he did was to stare in the most ill-mannered way imaginable; the next to make a dancing-academy bow, which was followed by an involuntary something of which Tom could hardly have been deemed guilty—he blushed furiously. However, after stammering a few words, which were meant to be extremely polite and complimentary, but only turned out awkward and flat, Tom was led off by his friends to see a few preparations; when, as it was growing late, it was decided that they should retire for the night.

But retiring for the night did not mean going directly to bed, as Squire Vaughan perceived, when, armed with a chamber candlestick, he encountered the trio upon the staircase; for Stephen was bearing the spirit stand; Frank carried a cigar box and the big leaden tobacco-holder; Tom Phipps held at arm's length the bright copper tea kettle; while one of the maids brought up the rear with a tray containing glasses, lemons, and sugar.

"Hum!" said the Squire; "off to bed, eh?"

"Oh, we shall just have a cigar round first," said Stephen.

"How many did you say?" inquired the Squire.

"Oh, only one," said Frank. "I'll keep them in order."

"Bound to say you will," said the Squire. "Well, good night. Not too much noise, please."

"I say, sir, don't go," said Tom. "Just one glass with us. I'll mix for you just as you like it. Come along."

The Squire looked at Tom, then at the lemons, then at the spirit stand and his tobacco box. He hesitated, and was on the point of yielding, when resolution came to his aid, and he shook his head.

"Just one," said Tom, "and half a pipe."

"Go to your father, you young tempter," shouted the Squire, rushing into his bed-room, and banging the door; but only to re-appear in an instant.

"Here, you Steve!" he shouted; "bring that tobacco-box down in the morning."

A snug chatty half-hour was spent over a glass of whiskey toddy; but bed was soon sought, for they were to be up with the lark, or as soon after as was possible to gentlemen of their age and constitution; and shortly after the inmates of the Hall were locked in those famed mystic arms. Frank slept, Stephen slept, and Alice slept, in spite of certain mental disarrangements; but then it must be taken into consideration that sleep had been somewhat interfered with of late; and let what passions will rule the brain for a time, the drowsy deity will have his tribute paid sooner or later.

There was a rattle and crash, like a small hail-storm, at the bed-room windows of the visitors, followed by a view-halloo, shouted in a cheery, stentorian voice, which soon brought the sleepers to the casements, where they were saluted by Stephen with—

"Look alive, boys; breakfast's all ready, and I'm now going to get the baits and tackle in the car. Look spy—it's half-past six, and we may as well make a day of it."

A Mem. on a Moustache.

DON'T, if you possess long moustachios, wax the ends. It is a nasty and a silly habit, as un-English as can be. Besides, it is dangerous, as I will show.

The Winkleys possess a favourite Persian cat, which they call the Shah, and his majesty sleeps on a rug at the foot of their bed.

Now, Mr. Winkley's moustache is in a constant state of being waxed, and its long ends stand directly out like the boards on a finger-post. A man with a moustache like that can scarcely consent to lumber his mind with the progress of science. In fact, for some time past, Mr. Winkley has had to give the whole of his mind to his moustache, which is so thoroughly done up with *pomade Hongroise*, that it keeps in its pointed state all night.

Mrs. Winkley was dressed to go down to breakfast the other morning, while her spouse still remained in bed.

The cat sat on its hind legs, listening to the conversation, her interest therein being somewhat intensified by the circumstance that her breakfast would be hastened by its conclusion. Mr. Winkley spoke to such length that the cat finally turned her attention in the direction of his voice.

The clothes were drawn so close to his face that she could not see it. But she observed something else, and for a moment all interest in the conversation was lost. Her eyes shone, her ears leaped forward, her tail whisked to and fro, her whole body quivered for an instant in the throes of a mighty emotion; then she sprang upon the bed, and in a flash both forepaws were planted in the face of the horrified husband, who sprang up, and uttered a discordant cry.

To see the look of astonishment on that cat's face when she discovered that what she had taken for a mouse's tail was no tail at all, but merely an end of her master's moustache, was a sight never to be for-

gotten. Completely dumbfounded and crestfallen, the unhappy animal leaped off from the bed, and slunk through the door from sight. It is very rarely a cat is taken in like that. But it should act as a warning to gentlemen who pet and fondle their hirsute appendages into such ridiculous forms; and to all such we say wax wiser!

A Mistake.

MISTAKES will happen in the best of families." A person with a basket on his arm stepped into one of our shops, and asked the man—

"What is the price of spring chickens?"

"Three shillings for good ones."

"Do you know, my fine fellow, that you made a mistake this morning when I was trading with you."

"A mistake!"

"Yes, sir; a very serious mistake."

"Why, I don't remember what it was."

"A mistake, sir, that your employer would not tolerate for a moment."

"Well, sir, what was it?"

"A mistake, sir, that would be considerable, if it had happened to any other man; but, sir, I have always made it a rule to correct mistakes, even if they are in my favour."

"For goodness' sake, what's the matter?"

"I have been put to considerable trouble to rectify it; labour that I am called upon to perform as a duty under the principle that 'Honesty is the best policy'; and I hope that you will take a lesson from this event, and not repeat it in the future."

"What is the mistake?"

"You know I purchased, this morning, one dozen eggs."

"Yes."

"For which I paid you one shilling."

"Yes."

"Well, sir, when I arrived home I discovered that you had made a mistake."

"Well, what is it?"

"Instead of a dozen eggs you had put up a dozen spring chickens"—(uncovering the basket and showing a dozen broken eggs in various stages of development)—"and as the price of spring chickens is 3s. and eggs only one penny, it makes a clean difference of 2s. 11d. each; and not wishing to wrong you or your employer, nor having any desire to go into the poultry business, I have brought them back, and will gladly exchange them for eggs, as I consider it only a mistake on your part."

The man took the basket and emptied the contents in the street, put in a dozen eggs, and handed the customer a cigar. The man winked out of his right eye—

"Don't say anything about this."

Customer winked out of his left—

"Oh, that's all right." (Exit.)

A BUMPTIOUS young fellow, boasting of his philosophical tendencies, wound up a long string of self-congratulations by the remark that he was a sort of Plato. "It must be electro-plate-oh," remarked a listener.

Found in the Street.

YES, all sorts, sir, and we takes the innercent and the guilty too sometimes, no doubt on it. Yer see we're men as generally has everybody's ill word, and nobody ever has a good word for us unless there's somebody as wants us, when it's "Oh, my good man," and "Ah, my good man," and at other times they won't look at us.

I remember once taking a poor chap for stealing bread, and if there's anything a poor fellow might be forgive it might be that. Well, sir, as I was a sayin', I was on my beat one day, or more properly speaking, it was evening, for it was just gettin' dusk one November arternoon, and a bitter cold, raw arternoon it was, with the smoky fog givin' yer the chokes, and getting into yer eyes, and makin' yer feel all on edge like, and as gritty as if yer was in a bed where some one had been a eatin' of bread. Folks was lighting up their shops, and I was a-growling to myself and wishin' it was time to go off duty, when I sees a crowd on in front, and there in the middle of it was a floury baker, goin' on like anything and shakin' away like any savage at a miserable-looking hollow-faced chap in a wesket and trousers, and his bare arms all a showin' through his ragged shirt. He hadn't got no hat, and his skin looked as blue and pinched as if he'd been frozen or just taken out of the river.

"Well," I says, "what's up?"

"Take him into custody, p'leeceman," says the baker.

"No, no, no," says the crowd.

"Now, none of that," says I.

"Take him into custody, p'leeceman," says the baker; "he stole a quartern loaf. Comes into my shop a-beggin', and because I would not give him anythin', he whips up a quartern loaf, and bolts with it; but I ran after him, and ketched him."

Well, I looks at the baker, and I looks at the man, and I thinks to myself, "Here's a case." But there was nothing else for it; so I takes the loaf under my arm, and gets hold of the poor, shiverin' crittur, and away we goes, with a long train of boys and sech a follerin' of us; but what with the bad night and the long ways as we had to go, they all soon drops off, and we goes along together, me and the poor chap, with only the people a-lookin' at us as we passed 'em.

"P'leeceman," says my prisoner, all at once, and it was the first word he had spoken—"p'leeceman," he says, "are you a man?"

Well, yer see, sir, I didn't like my job that evenin', for it raly did seem as if the poor chap took the bread because he was a-starvin'; and he wasn't a commoh chap neither, and we knows pretty well what sort a feller is by his looks, I can tell yer. So when he says them words in such an appealin' way like, I ain't werry soft, but I didn't like my job half so much as I did afore. However, it don't do for us to be soft, so I says, quite chuffy, as if I'd cut up rough—

"What d'yer mean?"

"Were you ever hungry—ever famishing?"

"Well," I says, "I can't say as I ever was, but I've been precious dry."

"Ah!" he says, with a sigh as went right through me, for I could see there was no sham in him, and then he hangs down his head, and walks on without saying a word.

He didn't say no more, so I thinks perhaps as he was hungry, and I says—

"You may as well carry this here loaf, and if it is picked why it don't much matter."

Lord, sir, it was a precious good job we wer'n't in a busy street, for I'm blessed if he didn't ketch hold of my hand with both his, and bust out a-cryin' just like a child.

"Hold up, old chap," I says, "I don't want to be rough with you. Are yer hungry?"

"It's those at home," he says, "those at home; but I can't help it, I'm weak—weak—weak."

And I'm blessed if he wasn't, sir, so weak that he tottered in his walk, and I could see there was no dodge in him, poor chap. Jest then we comes up to an "All hot" can, "Two or none for a penny," yer knows—beefsteaks and hot kidney; so I pulls up, makin' believe as I should like one myself, and we has some—half a dozen I think I bought, and makes him have best part of 'em; but, Lord bless yer, he wouldn't touch 'em, but begs of me to take 'em to number 99, King's-court.

"For God's sake," he says, "take 'em, and I'll bless yer."

"Now, come," I says, "none o' that ere; you're in custody, you know, so you'll jest eat them kidney or beefsteak pies, or whatsomever they is, and then come along; and if so be as you wants half a dozen hot kidney, or a few taters, or what not, took to number 99, King's-court, why I knows the man as'll take 'em, so peg away."

To ha' seen him stare you might ha' thought he'd never had a good word said to him in his life; and when he had had his stare out, if he didn't lay hold o' them pies and eat 'em in a way as made one uncomfortable, it seemed so un-Christian-like and wolfish.

Well, sir, I never did like my job a-takin' him, but now I hated myself; and s'elp me, sir, if he'd ha' cut and run if I wouldn't ha' gone after him down the wrong street.

When he'd done he looked as if another half-dozen would ha' been welcome; but I knowed what was what, so I takes him into the first public we passed and orders a pint o' dog's-nose, what we calls purl, yer know, and then I does my half pull o' that, for I knows in his state he couldn't stand much; and then we goes on towards the station; while the stuff makes him open his lips, and he begs on me to go as I had said, and if I could, take half the loaf too.

For, says he—

"They're nearly starved."

"Who is?" says I.

"My wife and the little ones," he says.

"More shame for you to let 'em," says I.

"Man, man," he says, and he looks me so savage in the face—"man, man," he says, "I've tried all, everything that a husband and father could do; I've fought for, prayed for, begged for work; I've tramped the great city through day after day; I've sought work till I've turned home heart-sick and weary, to sell, piece by piece, everything we could

sell; till look at me," he says, "look at me—who'd give me work? Who'd believe me honest? Who wouldn't drive me away as a vagabond if I asked for work? And what did I do to-night? I took what no man would give me—bread for my starving wife and children, and now—God help them, for I can't."

He'd been speaking as fierce as a lion at first, and now he broke down all at wunst, and seemed as though he was going to bust out crying again; but he didn't. And so we walks on, and I breaks the loaf in two pieces, pulls it apart, yer know, sir, crummy way, and when the charge was made—for I found the baker a waitin' at the station, for he got there first—I waited to see my prisoner into a cell, and, afore he was locked up, I shoves the half-loaf under his arm, and a great coat as lay over a bench as we went along. Then off I goes arter the baker, who was one o' your red-faced, chuffy little chaps, one o' them coves as has sech a precious good opinion o' themselves. He'd only jest got round the corner when I hails him, and he stops short.

"Well, governor," I says, "what'll yer take to drink? Give it a name."

"Oh," says he, with a bit of a sneer, "you mean what am I goin' to stand?"

"No, I don't," I says, "for I've jest had plenty."

"What d'yer mean?" sez he.

"Why, that there poor chap, as we've just locked up."

"Why, I never knowed you p'leecemen could come the soft like that," sez he; "but what d'yer mean about 'poor chap'?"

"Well, come in here," I says, "and I'll tell yer."

So we goes in, and as it was cold we has two fours o' gin hot, with sugar, and as I was now up, I begins to tell him about what took place comin' to the station, and I says as I was a goin' to take something to number 99, King's-court, and see if all he'd said was true.

"Here," says baker to the barman, "fill these here glasses again, Charles," and then turnin' to me, says he—

"Governor, if I'd ha' known all this when that pore chap come in to my shop to-day, I'd ha' give him a dozen loaves; I'm hanged if I wouldn't."

Which was rather hot of him, yer know, sir, and I hope you'll excuse me a-sayin' it, but them was his very words, and if he didn't look as excited as if he didn't know what to do with himself.

"Tip that glass off, p'leeceman," he says, "and let's be off."

"Well, good night," I says, "and if I was you, I don't think I should press the charge agin him to-morrow."

"May I never rise another batch if I do," he says; "but come on."

"Well, once more, good night," I says.

"Wait a bit," says he, "I'm goin' with you."

"Are yer?" I says.

"I just am," says he.

"Then come on," says I; and away we went.

On the way I gets a sixpenny Watling at a public, and then at a tater-can a dozen hot mealies, which I shoves in my coat pockets, and the pie in my hat; while the baker he slips into the fust shop we comes

to, and picks out a couple of the best crusted cottages as he could find.

Well, sir, we gets at last to number 99, King's-court, and, afore we goes in, I says to the baker, says I—

"Now if this is a do, we'll just have a friendly supper off what we've brought, and a drop of hot."

"Agreed," says he.

And we went upstairs, and knocked at the fust floor front.

"Mrs. Graham lodge here?" I says.

"Three pair back," says the lodger, a slamming the door in our faces.

"You'd better go fust," says I to the baker; "they don't like the looks o' my hat."

That was afore we took to 'elmets, yer know, sir.

So the baker goes up fust, and I follows—up the dirty old staircase, till we stood on the landing, opposite to the door, where we could hear a young 'un a-whimperin'. So the baker knocks, and some one says "Come in," and in we goes; and, Lord, sir, it was a heart-breaking sight, sure-ly. I'm a rough 'un, sir, and used to all sorts of things, and it takes a good deal to get a rise out o' me; but I was done this time, and so was baker. I never see nought as upset me like that did, and I hope I never shall again. No light—no fire—and pretty nigh no furniture, as far as we could see from the light as shined up into the room from a court at the back, where there was a gas lamp, and that warn't much, as you may suppose, sir. And jest then the lodger in the front room opens the door, and offers her candle. I steps back, and takes it, and then comes back, and shuts the door arter me. Good Lord—good Lord, what they must ha' suffered! There was a thin, half-dressed, pinched-faced woman huddling up three little children together; and though they didn't know it, sir, I do. They didn't know as death had knocked at their doors, and was only a waiting a bit before he came in. Think, sir, a cold November night in a bare, garret-like room, and no fire, and no proper coverin', and no proper food, but the mother and children, close up together, on a straw mattress, with some rags and an old blanket to cover 'em.

"Oh, my God!" said the baker. You see, sir, he was rather strong in what he said, and he pulls off his coat and claps it over the poor wife's shoulders. "Here, pull out them hot taters," he says, and he hurries me so I could hardly get 'em out, but he soon has a hot 'un in each o' the children's hands, and tellin' me to keep 'em goin', he cuts down stairs as hard as he could pelt, and afore you could think it possible, back he comes again, with his arms full o' bundles o' wood, an' he stieks a couple all loose and sets light to 'em, and soon makes a cheerful blaze, as made the poor things creep up to, and so close as I was almost obliged to keep the two littlest back, or they would ha' singed baker's coat. Away goes baker agen, and very soon back he comes with one o' them little sacks o' coals—half hundreds yer know, such as they sells poor folk's coals in, and then he rams these coals on like fury, while the poor woman looks on quite stupid like.

"God forgive me," says baker, looking ready to bust; "what could I ha' been thinking of? Here,

Bobby," he says, holdin' out a shilling, "go down and get a pot of hot ale and some gin in; a drop'll do even them kids good."

I goes down in such a hurry that I forgets all about his shilling, and when they'd all had a taste round, it was wonderful how much better they looked; and then baker says, says he—

"Now you jest stop here half an hour till I gets back."

And stop I did, sir, a-talking to the poor woman, an' I told her all about the loaf, and made her sob and cry to hear where her husband was. But she brightened up when I told her as he'd had a good feed, and was well wrapped up, and how baker wouldn't prosecute, I was sure. And then, back comes baker, and his wife with him, and they'd got a couple o' blankets and a rug, and at last there was such goin's on, that I'm blest if I warn't obliged to go out on the landin', for the poor woman wanted to kiss me; and if I'd ha' stayed in the room a minute longer I knows I should have disgraced the force by acting like a soft.

Soon afterwards baker and his wife comes out, and we all goes off, but not till it was settled that I was to go and have dinner with 'em on the next Sunday, which I did, and I'm blowed—which I hope you'll excuse, sir—if I knew Mr. Graham, which was the poor fellow I took, for baker had rigged him out, and got him a place to go to; and since then I've often seen—well, if it ain't half-past ten, sir, and—not a drop more, thank ye, or I shall have the key of the street.

How to Introduce a Patent.

A MAN holding a large cylindrical machine between his knees excited considerable attention in a railway carriage the other day. An old gentleman who had been talking about the war cast his eyes on it, and said—

"Let 'em go ahead with their ironclads—some Yankee 'll invent a torpedo that'll fix 'em, you see."

Instantly the man with the cylinder became the centre of attraction.

"Aint loaded, is she?" said a lank countryman, giving it a rap with his horny knuckles that would have exploded a twenty-four pounder, and causing a nervous man to hastily seek the platform.

"An invention of yours, my friend?" said a bald-headed man with spectacles, on the opposite seat, bending over curiously, in which he was joined by his neighbours.

"Waal, not edzackly," said the man with the cylinder, tugging at the top of it until the curiosity of the whole carriage was aroused. "I'm an agent for it," he continued, as he pulled off the cover. "It's Jenkins's patent back-action fam'ly b'iler. Kin put yer week's wash in the bottom and bile yer dinner in the top. Will fit enny cook-stove. Price only dollar narf. Take a cirkelar. It's the only reliable—"

Putting the man out of the carriage was certainly justifiable, but jamming the tin kitchen over his ears on to his shoulders and kicking him from the platform seemed unnecessarily severe.

The Landlord's Wager.

NOT so very long ago there arrived at Liverpool a gentleman from a large town on the railroad between there and Wigan. He put up at an hotel, and displayed a tremendous appetite. At the end of the week he expected to be presented with his bill; but no bill was presented, although he had no luggage at all. Time went on, and still no bill. The landlord treated him with lofty courtesy, as did the waiters. One night, however, he did not return to the hotel, and the next morning the landlord hired a detective, who hunted and found him. The stranger thought the landlord was going to put him in gaol for swindling, or something else, and he felt very much alarmed about it. But no; the landlord was as pleasant as ever. He asked the stranger what he had done that he should desert his hotel in that way, inquired whether the waiters had offended him, and begged him to return again.

After a few days the stranger took the landlord aside, thanked him with tears in his eyes, and asked him why he was so anxious for him to eat at that hotel free of charge.

"I'll tell you," was the reply. "I don't care a fig for you personally; but since you have been eating here, I have had forty more guests to dinner than I ever had before. They come here for no other purpose than to see you eat—you eat so hearty. But the trouble is, I had a fifty pounds bet you would choke to death at the dinner-table within a specified time. To day is the last day, and I've lost."

WHILE men believed that madness meant possession by a demon, it is not difficult, perhaps, to account for the superstitious and brutal treatment shown to those possessed; but the reader will be amazed by the details of the scientific devices, happily of a past age, planned for the cure of the unsound. One of these was to entice the sufferer to walk across a floor, which, suddenly giving way, dropped him into a bath, where he was half-drowned. Another mode of torture was to let the patients down a well, in which the water, made gradually to rise, frightened them with the prospect of an awful death. Within the memory of men still living, the patients of Bethlehem Hospital (London), chained to the wall like wild beasts, were shown to the public on certain days of the week at the charge of twopence a visitor; and here were to be found in their cells, crouching on straw, women with nothing but a blanket for clothing. George III., in 1788, was subjected to a uselessly severe treatment, being constantly tortured with a strait-waistcoat, and denied the society of his wife and children. He recovered a few weeks after the substitution of kindness for severity. A Parliamentary committee, which elicited the horrors of madhouses in 1815, struck the first blow against the system of mechanical restraint of the insane; but it was not before the early years of the present reign that the old order of things finally yielded to the benevolent treatment set on foot by Drs. Gardner, Hill, and Conolly.

The Blue Ridge.

IN the early autumn of the year 1849, about half an hour of sunset, I drew rein in front of a large double log-house, on the very summit of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Eastern Kentucky.

The place was evidently kept as a tavern, at least, so a sign proclaimed, and here I determined to demand accommodation for myself and servant, Bose, a dark-skinned body-guard. Bose and I had been playmates in child and boyhood, and I need hardly say that the faithful fellow was attached to me, as I was to him, and on more than one occasion he had shown his devotion.

There had been a "shooting-match" at the Mountain House that day, and, as I dismounted, I saw through the open window of the bar-room a noisy, drunken, and evidently quarrelsome set of back-woodsmen, each of whom was swearing by all possible and impossible oaths that he was not only the best shot, but that he could out-fight, out-jump, out-wrestle, run faster, jump higher, dive deeper and come up drier than any other man "on the mountain."

"I say, Mars Ralph," said Bose, in a low tone, as I handed him my bridle-rein, "I don't like de looks ob dem in dar. S'pose we goes on to de next house. Tain't fur."

"Nonsense, Bose," I replied; "these fellows are only on a little spree over their shooting. We have nothing to do with them, nor they with us. Take the horses round to the stable, and see to them yourself. You know they've had a hard day of it."

And throwing my saddle-bags over my shoulders, I walked up the narrow path to the house.

I found, as I have intimated, the bar-room filled with a noisy, turbulent crowd, who one and all stared at me without speaking as I went up to the bar and inquired if I and my servant could have accommodation for the night.

Receiving an affirmative reply from the landlord, a little, red-headed, cadaverous-looking specimen of the "clay-eater," I desired to be at once shown to my room, whither I went, but not until I had been compelled to decline a score of requests to "take a drink," much to the disgust of the stalwart bacchanalians.

The room to which I was shown was at the far end of a long, two-storeyed structure, evidently but recently added on to the main building, which it intersected at right angles. A gallery extended along the front, by means of which the rooms were reached.

I found my apartment to be large and comparatively well furnished, there being, besides the bed, a comfortable cot, half a dozen "split-bottomed" chairs, a heavy clothes-press, and a bureau with glass.

There were two windows, one alongside the door, and the other in the opposite end of the room. The first-mentioned was heavily barred with stout oak strips, a protection, I presumed, against intrusion from the porch, while across the latter was drawn a heavy woollen curtain.

In the course of half an hour Bose entered, and announced that the cattle had been properly at-

tended to, and a few moments later a bright-faced mulatto girl summoned us to supper.

Supper over, I returned to my room, first requesting to be roused for an early breakfast, as I desired to be on the road by sunrise.

Thoroughly wearied with my day's ride, I at once began preparations for retiring, and had drawn off one boot, when Bose came in rather hastily, looking furtively over his shoulder, and then cautiously closing and locking the door.

"Mars Ralph, dar's gwine to be trouble in dis house afore mornin'," he said.

And I saw in a moment that something had occurred to upset the faithful fellow's equilibrium.

"Why, Bose, what is it? What do you mean?" I asked, barely restraining a smile.

"I tole you, Mars Ralph, we'd better trabble fudder," was the rather mysterious reply. "You see dat yaller gal dere tole me dar would be a muss if we stayed in this 'founded ole house all night."

By close questioning I elicited the fact that the girl had really warned him that four men whom I had noticed talking together were a desperate set of villains, and probably had designs upon our property, if not our lives.

The girl had seen two of them at the stable while I was at supper, and by cautiously creeping into a stall, next the one in which they stood, had heard enough to convince her that they meant mischief. Subsequently to this, she also saw the landlord in close confab with the entire party, and from his actions judged that he was urging the men to their nefarious work.

"I tell you, Mars Ralph, dem white trash aint arter no good--now you heard me," persisted Bose.

I had begun to think so myself, but what was to be done? The situation was full of embarrassment, and I felt that nothing could be done save to wait and watch, and by being on the alert, defeat their plans by a determined resistance.

I found that from the barred window, in which there was a broken pane of glass, a good view of the stable could be had.

Then for the other window.

I crossed the room, drew aside the heavy curtain, and, raising the sash, looked out.

A single glance was sufficient to cause me a thrill of surprise, and I gave a low exclamation that instantly brought Bose to my side.

Far below, I could see the faint glimmer of water, the low murmur of which came indistinctly up from the depths, while, on a level with what should have been the ground, I dimly saw the waving tree-tops, as they gently swayed before the fresh night-breeze, and knew that the window overlooked a chasm, the soundings of which I could only guess at.

In other words, the house, or that portion of it, was built upon the very verge of a cliff, the solid rock forming a foundation more lasting than any that could be made by the hands of man.

I leaned far out, and saw that there was not an inch of space left between the heavy log on which the structure rested and the edge of the precipice; and then I turned away with the full conviction that if escape must be made, it certainly would not

be in that direction. There was nothing especially strange in this; there were many houses so constructed—I had seen one or two myself—and yet when I drew back into the room, and saw the look in Bose's dusky face, I felt that danger, quick and deadly, was hovering in the air.

Without speaking, I went to my saddle-bags and got out my pistols—a superb pair of long double rifles, that I knew to be accurate anywhere under half a hundred yards.

"Dar! dem's what I likes to see!" exclaimed Bose, as he dived down into his own bag, and fished out the old horse-pistol that had belonged to my grandfather, and which I knew was loaded to the muzzle with Number One buckshot. It was a terrible weapon at close quarters.

The stables in which our horses were feeding could be watched, and by events transpiring in that locality we would shape our actions. I found the door could be locked from the inside, and, in addition to this, I improvised a bar by means of a chair-leg wrenched off, and thrust through a heavy iron staple that had been driven into the wall. Its fellow on the opposite side was missing.

We then lifted the heavy clothes-press before the window, leaving just room enough on one side to clearly see, and, if necessary, fire through; dragged the bureau against the door with as little noise as possible, and felt that everything that was possible had been done.

A deathlike silence reigned over the place, broken only once by the voice of the coloured girl singing as she crossed the stable-yard.

I had fallen into a half-doz, seated in a chair near the window facing the stables, where Bose was on watch, when suddenly I felt a light touch upon my arm, and the voice of the faithful sentinel in my ear—

"Wake up, Mars Ralph; dey's foolin' 'bout de stable doo' arter de horses, shuah," brought me wide awake to my feet.

Cautiously peeping out, I saw at a glance that Bose was right in his conjectures. There were two of them—one, standing out in the clear moonlight, evidently watching my window, while the other—and I fancied it was the landlord—was in the shadow near the door, which at that moment slowly swung open.

As the man disappeared within the building, a low, keen whistle cut the air, and at the same instant I heard the knob of my door cautiously tried.

The thing was now plain. While those below were securing the horses, those above were either attempting to gain access with murderous intent, or else on guard to prevent my coming to the rescue of my property.

A low hiss from Bose brought me to his side from the door where I had been listening.

"Dey's got de hosses out in de yard," he whispered, as he drew aside to let me look out through the broken pane.

"Take the door," I said, "and fire through if they attack. I am going to shoot that fellow holding the horses."

"Lordy, Mars Ralph, it's de tavern keeper! He

aint no 'count. Drop de big man!" was the sensible advice, which I determined to adopt.

Noiselessly drawing aside the curtain, I rested the muzzle of my pistol upon the sash where the light had been broken away, and drew a bead upon the tallest of the two men who stood, holding three horses, out in the bright moonlight.

The sharp crack of the weapon was instantly followed by a yell of pain, and I saw the ruffian reel backward, and measure his length upon the earth, and then from the main building there rang out—

"Murder! Murder! Oh, help!"

Like lightning it flashed across my mind. There were three horses out in the open lot! There was, then, another traveller besides ourselves.

A heavy blow descended upon the door, and a voice roared—

"Quick! Burst the infernal thing open, and let me get at him! The scoundrel has killed Dave!"

"Let them have it, Bose," I whispered, rapidly reloading my pistol. "There, the second panel."

With a steady hand the plucky fellow levelled the huge weapon, and pulled the trigger.

A deafening report followed, and again a shrill cry of mortal anguish told that the shot had not been wasted.

"Sabe us! how it do kick!" exclaimed Bose, under his breath.

The blow had fallen like an unexpected thunder-bolt upon the bandits, and a moment later we heard their retreating footsteps down the corridor.

"Dar'll be more of 'em heah 'fore long, Mars Ralph," said Bose, with an ominous shake of the head. "I 'spects dese b'longs to a band, and, ef dey comes, an' we still heah, we gone 'coons for shuah."

This view of the case was new to me; but I felt the force of it. I knew that such bands did exist in these mountains.

A hasty glance through the window from which I had just fired showed me that escape in that direction was impossible. I looked out and saw a man, with a rifle in his hand, dodge round the corner of the stable. He was on guard, and then I knew they had sent off for reinforcements!

Stunned for a moment, I turned round, and stared helplessly at Bose; but he, brave fellow that he was, never lost his head for an instant.

"Bound to leab heah, Mars Ralph," he said, quite confidently. "An' dar aint no way gwine 'cept tro dat winder;" and he pointed to the one overlooking the cliff.

I merely shook my head, and turned to watch again, hoping to get a shot at the rascal on guard.

Bose, left to his own devices, at once went to work. I heard him fussing about the bed for some time, but never looked to see what he was after until he spoke.

"Now den fur de rope," I heard him say, and in an instant I had caught his meaning.

He had stripped the bed of its covering, dragged off the heavy tick, and the stout hempen rope with which it was "corded."

In five minutes he had drawn the rope through its many turnings, and then, gathering the coil in

his hands, he threw up the sash, and prepared to take soundings.

It failed to touch bottom; but, nowise disheartened, he seized the cotton coverlet, and spliced on. This succeeded, and the cord was drawn up preparatory to knotting it in place of cross-pieces.

In the meanwhile the silence without had been broken more than once. A shrill, keen whistle, such as I had heard before, was given by the man on watch, and replied to by some one seemingly a little way off. Then I heard footsteps—soft, cat-like ones—on the verandah outside, showing that the robbers were on the alert at all points.

At length Bose announced the "ladder" ready. It was again lowered from the window, and the end we held was made fast to the bed we had dragged over for the purpose.

"Now, den, Mars Ralph, I go down fust, and see if um strong 'nough to bar us."

And he was half-way out of the window before I could speak.

"No, Bose, you shall not," I answered, firmly, drawing him back into the room. "You must—"

The words were lost in the din of a furious and totally unexpected attack upon the door.

The dull, heavy strokes of the axe were intermingled with the sharp, quick clatter of hatchets as they cut away at the barrier, and once in a while I could hear deep oaths, as though they had been rendered doubly savage by our resistance.

"Here, Bose, your pistol! Quick!" I whispered, and the heavy charge went crashing through, followed by shrieks and curses of pain and rage.

"Now, then, out with you! I will hold the place," I said, rushing back to the window. "Come, Bose, hurry, or all will be lost."

The brave fellow now wished to insist upon my going first; but he saw that time was wasting, and he glided down the rope, gradually disappearing in the heavy shadows.

The fall of one of their number had caused only a momentary lull, and I heard them renew the assault with tenfold fury.

I dared not fire again, for I felt that every bullet would be needed, when affairs were more pressing.

It seemed an age before I felt the signal from below that the rope was ready for me; but it came, and I let myself down, pausing an instant, as my eyes gained a level with the sill, to take a last look into the room.

As I did so the door gave way, and the blood-thirsty demons poured over the threshold.

I knew that I had no time for deliberate movements. They would instantly discover the mode of escape, and either cut the rope or else fire down upon me.

I had taken the precaution to draw on my heavy riding-gloves, and my hands, thus protected, did not suffer as much as might have been expected.

With my eyes fixed upon the window, I slid rapidly down, and struck the earth with a jar that wrenched every bone in my body.

Quick as lightning I was seized by Bose, and dragged some paces on one side, and close against the face of the cliff.

Not a second too soon, for down came a volley,

tearing up the earth about the foot of the rope where a moment before I had stood.

"Thunder, they will escape! After them down the rope!" yelled a voice almost inarticulate with rage.

And I saw a dark form swing out and begin the descent.

"Now, Mars Ralph," whispered Bose, significantly, and with a quick aim I fired at the swaying figure.

Without a sound the man released his hold, and came down like a lump of lead, shot through the brain.

Another had started in hot haste, and was more than half-way out of the window, when suddenly the scene above was brilliantly lit up by the glare of a torch.

Again the warning voice of the watchful black called my attention to the figure now struggling desperately to regain the room, and, as before, I threw up my pistol, and covering the exposed side, drew trigger.

With a convulsive effort, the wretch, springing far out into the empty void, turned once over, and came down with a rushing sound upon the jagged rocks that lay at the foot of the precipice.

A single look to see that the window was clear—we knew there could be no path leading down for a long distance either way, or they would never have attempted the rope—and we plunged headlong into the dense forest that clothed the mountain side.

We got clear, it is true, but with the loss of our animals and baggage; for the next day, when we returned with a party of Regulators, we found the place a heap of smouldering ashes, and no living soul to tell whither the robbers had fled.

THE BATTLE OF SADOWA.—A German paper relates an anecdote of the battle of Sadowa, which its informant professes to have heard from the mouth of Prince Bismarck himself, the principal actor in the incident. The Emperor, mounted on his well-known black horse, then called "Verenda," but since christened "Sadowa," took a lively interest in the battle, and followed the fighting with an eager eye, placing himself repeatedly in positions of danger, and remaining there utterly regardless of the shower of shot and shell pelting down around him. Prince Bismarck, riding by his side, repeatedly adjured his master not to expose himself needlessly; but the Soldier King persistently maintained that the chief commander must ever be where he is most needed. At length the Prince—then simply Herr von Bismarck—entreated the King, if he would be regardless of his own safety, at any rate to have pity upon the Prime Minister, at whose hands the King's life would be required by the country. The King shook him by the hand, and said, "Well, Bismarck, let us ride on." With that he began to canter leisurely on, as if he were riding Unter den Linden. The Premier's patience forsook him. Riding close up to the King's horse, as if by accident, he drove his foot into its flank. The horse bounded forward. The King looked round. "I believe he guessed what I had done," says Prince Bismarck; "but he said nothing."

Adjusting a Loss.

KEEN fellows, those insurance agents!

There was an alarm of fire the other day, caused by a gas explosion, in the saloon of Michael McGowan. As soon as the excitement had quieted down a little, Mr. McGowan started for the insurance office, where he had taken out a policy on his "shebeen" and its contents.

Soon after Michael left, a quiet-looking gentleman entered and interviewed Mrs. McGowan on the subject of gas. He was very severe—he thought the gas had been improperly used; he doubted if the company would put pipes in there again if so much damage was done.

Mrs. McGowan was alarmed. She knew that much of Mr. McGowan's business was transacted "under the gaslight," and she volubly protested—

"Aisy, sir, av ye plaze. Is it the gas and fire? Divil a harm have they done, anyway, barrin' Mike drivin' the head o' him through the windy; but many the worse lick he's got whin he's been out wid the byes. Burn, is it? Nothing was burnt but Mike's old coat. As for the whiskey, it wouldn't burn if you'd throw it on the fire. Damage, is it? Wait till I get a drop o' whitewash to-morrow, and divil of a scorch ye'll see."

Meanwhile Mike, with his head bound up, and wearing a woeful countenance, was waiting at the insurance office.

Presently the agent arrived, and Mr. McGowan opened the case at once.

"Good mornin', Mister Premium. I've jist drapped in for my insurance, sir. The gas works—bad luck to 'em—boosted the stoofin' all out of the pipes, and sit fire to me place, and trows me clane troo the windy, wid me head against Murphy's wall as kapes the grocer's shop, that came from county Cork and knows me well, barrin' he sells whiskey on the sly, which, being a grocer, is agin me rights."

As soon as Mr. McGowan stopped for wind, the agent quietly inquired—

"How much do you think your loss is, Mr. McGowan?"

"Well, I don't know, sir. What wid me place busted and me stock burned, my clothing destroyed, my head bruk, to say nothing of the blud on Murphy's wall, I'm thinking a matter of five hundred dollars would be squarin' me."

"Mr. McGowan," said the agent, drawing a bank-note from his drawer, "I have been up to your place this morning, and seen what damage was done, besides having the pleasure of an interview with Mrs. McGowan. There are twenty dollars to pay for a bucket of whitewash, a pane of glass, and your broken head. And don't you ever try to play games on insurance people."

Mr. McGowan's face lengthened inch by inch, and his square jaw dropped as the insurance man continued. Finally, his eye falling under the gaze of the other, he pocketed the money, signed the necessary papers, and merely remarked—

"So ye've had an interview wid the old woman, have ye? Begorra, I'll have one wid her myself agin whin I go back."

Mr. McGowan was true to his word, for he paid the twenty dollars to the clerk of the police-court the next morning, for, as Mrs. McG. described it, "batin' her like an ould carpet."

The Egotist's Note-book.

WILL theatrical managers be kind enough to give an eye to their orchestras—at least, such of them as have not yet placed the band beneath the stage? My reason for saying this is that, presuming on their sidewise position in front of the stalls, certain uneducated musicians pass their spare time in staring offensively at the lady visitors to the house. I have noticed this for years, and seen that the habit is growing. At one reopening, a few nights since, an exceedingly handsome, Hyperion-like tootler upon a wind instrument made himself remarkably objectionable—what time he twiddled the points of his moustache and the delicate curls upon his noble forehead, till his fingers must have been too weary to hold his instrument.

Reports say that when Inspector Clarke was placed in the dock beside the detectives under examination, one of them shed tears—for he loved that Clarke as a brother he did, and that Clarke he worshipped he. But that is questionable. I'm afraid, however, that it is not the detectives who gush, but the reporters who make the notes.

This is not such a very bad story:—

A German lost his wife, and the next week he married again, and his new wife asked him to take her out riding. He felt indignant that she should have no more respect than that for his deceased wife, and said—

"You dink I ride out mit another woman so soon after the death of mine frau?"

Neither is this, of a young lady, whose affections, like that of many other young friends, had never been sought by a faithful he. Despairing of being sought in marriage, she could at least enjoy the pleasure of teasing her friends. So she contrived that the shadow of one of her father's old hats should fall upon the blind by night. Envy reigned in that village, till she was found out by the shifting of the candle when two sister spinsters were on the watch.

Who wants a giant? Here is one who is growing fast. Yow Shan, by his own account, is twenty-two years of age, a native of Kwangsi, comes of a well-to-do family, and is the large owner of a small farm. His ancestors have, for several generations, lived in Kwangsi; but the family was originally founded in a village called Loong Shan, in the Shuntak district of the Kwangtung Province. To this village the great young man returned last year, and he is now on a visit to some friends in Hong Kong. The story which the giant relates, by way of explanation or apology for his extraordinary size, partakes somewhat of the miraculous—is, in fact, slightly "fishy," in a metaphorical as well as literal sense. He was not, he asserts, unusually big when a child; while

his parents and other members of the Shan family are merely mortals of the most ordinary proportions. Up to the time when Yow attained his seventeenth or eighteenth year, he was a lad in no way remarkable for size or height; but here the fish story comes in. One day he went to wash in the stream, and caught a fish that was scaleless, and, on eating the same, he became violently ill, and remained so for two months. When he recovered, he found that he had made a pretty fair start in growth, and was almost "swelling wisely;" and he has made such progress since, that he now stands eight feet three inches in height. He said he grew at the rate of about three or four inches a year, and the growth was observed to be invariably most speedy immediately after an attack of illness. The "growing boy," indeed, is still growing, and no one can say where or when he may stop. Since last year he has added two inches to his stature; and, as he is not at present in a very good state of health, it may be presumed that the growing energy is in full play. As compared with Chang, who was fully developed, and in the prime of life, Yow Shan is thin and unsymmetrical, though he may yet develop into a finely-rounded and well-proportioned Titan. He is much longer in the legs than Chang, but he is comparatively weak in the upper part of the body, and is not by any means strong in the chest.

Apropos of the above, one gets thinking whether it is possible, by careful choice of food, to grow a child to an enormous size. Perhaps somebody with a growing boy will chance it. It must be somebody with a strong income.

The people of the East Indian islands have hit upon a cure for small-pox, measles, and similar blood diseases. For we read in a report from the chief of the district of the Principe that persons of all ages continuing to be attacked by measles and small-pox, surprising results had been obtained there against these diseases by making use of the gall of serpents of the boa variety. It is pleasant to see that only the gall is used; for if it was the whole boa constrictor that was to be taken, the cure might be effected by an affectionate embrace, and certainly then the patient would be sure not to die of the disease.

By a consideration of the pension list, it seems that the Marquis of Salisbury is consoled for his loss of "post fives," whatever they may be, with an annual payment of £4 10s., and the Earl of Powis with £3 14s. 8d. I wonder what they do with all the money!

A correspondent at Alexandra telegraphs that the cylinder containing Cleopatra's Needle has been towed into a dry dock to be fitted, and that when this is done, and the towing arranged, the voyage to this country will commence. It is to be hoped that fine weather will prevail when the Needle threads the Straits of Gibraltar.

Sir John St. Aubyn, M.P., speaking at the open-

ing of an Exhibition of Fine Arts, referred to the same subject, and said that Cleopatra's Needle was to be brought over, but it was not known where it was to be put. He thought a society was wanted, supplemented by Parliament, to protect London from the buildings that were every day being put up. The society is wanted far more to inspect the mortar with which the buildings are put up, and to ask why it contains no lime.

How many people who smoke Manilla cigars know that they are made by women who roll them upon their legs? They make the cigar in the shape of a spindle, thick in the middle and tapering towards the ends. One long cigar is cut in half, and, as we used to say with our sums, two remain.

How nice to be the proprietor of a dashing boys' weekly of the popular order; and how fine an opportunity we have now for some magistrate to deliver a peroration on some of our cheap literature. Here are the Blackheath highwaymen discovered, and proved to be a couple of silly boys of Portsmouth. It seems that the employer of one of them was robbed of a cash-box, which was found, as was a revolver, in a field. The prisoners were suspected, and their boxes searched, when another revolver was discovered, and cartridges which fitted the weapon were found in the field. There were many copies of the *Young Briton*, the *Boy's Standard*, and "Nightshade; or, Claude Duval, the Dashing Highwayman," found also in one of their boxes. Perhaps by this time they have found out that the footpad's is not a noble career; and if they had lived a little earlier they might have also discovered that the dashing highwayman was a contemptible knave, with no more bravery in him than a blackbeetle.

Dr. Kenealy has issued an address to the electors of Stoke, in which he bitterly complains of the savage hate and cruel fury of the local Tories and Liberals, who have hounded on their miserable followers to a line of conduct calculated to bring the borough into scorn. They have, he says, shown the fury of wild beasts, and would murder him if they could. Dr. Kenealy writes M.P. at the end of his name, and still he is not happy. But what can be expected from such sons of clay as those of Stoke, Hanley, Burslem, and Co.?

Take care of your pipes, oh smokers, for a poor little child has been killed by playing with one. It is not, perhaps, generally known that the essential oil distilled in the act of smoking tobacco, and which collects as a blackish brown mass in a pipe, is a most deadly poison.

The *Western Morning News* is answerable for the following:—"An incident has occurred on one of the suburban lines, which will certainly be supposed by many to be only *ben trovato*, but it is a real fact. A lady, who seemed perfectly well before the train entered a tunnel, suddenly alarmed her fellow-passengers during the temporary darkness

by exclaiming, 'I am poisoned!' On re-emerging into daylight, an awkward explanation ensued. The lady carried with her two bottles, one of methylated spirit, the other of cognac. Wishing, presumably, for a refresher on the sly, she took advantage of the gloom; but she applied the wrong bottle to her lips. Time pressed, and she took a good drain. The consequence was she was nearly poisoned, and had to apply herself honestly and openly to the brandy bottle as a corrective, amid the ironical condolences of the passengers she had previously alarmed." *Ben trovato* or fact, I don't think I should give a patient brandy to recover her from the effects of drinking methylated spirit. I should as soon administer white arsenic to cure the poisoning effected by red. It may be right, but I don't believe it is.

Mr. Osborne Morgan has spoken of Mr. Gladstone as having the verdict of the nation on his side, though he had been made a target for the abuse of every puny coxcomb in the House, and of every dyspeptic lounge in a London club.

After all said and done respecting sites for Cleopatra's Needle, no more suitable one has been found than that proposed by an eminent naturalist. He suggests the open space in front of the British Museum.

A Preston boy read to Mr. Steele, the Government Inspector, Pope's lines:—

"Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound;
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground."

"What," asked Mr. Steele, "is meant by 'his native air'?"

The intelligent boy promptly replied, "The 'air of his own 'ead.'"

The experiment which was tried last year of employing carrier pigeons for the purpose of bringing early intelligence each morning from the fishing ground of the results of the night's labour, is again being resorted to this season, and with the most satisfactory results. One of the birds is taken out in each boat in the afternoon, and after the nets have been hauled on the following morning, and the extent of the catch ascertained, the pigeon is despatched with a small piece of parchment tied round its neck, containing information as to the number of crans on board, the position of the boat, the direction of the wind, and the prospects of the return journey, &c. If there is no wind to take the boat back, or if it is blowing in an unfavourable direction, a request is made for a tug, and from the particulars given as to the bearings of the craft she can be picked up easily by the steamer. The other advantages of the system are that, when the curers are apprised of the quantity of herrings they may expect, they can make preparations for expediting the delivering and curing of the fish. When let off from the boats, the birds invariably circle three times round overhead, and then sweep away towards the land with great rapidity, generally flying at the rate

of about a mile per minute. The pigeons require very little training, and soon know where to land with their message. And yet they put these poor things in pies!

It appears that one of the entertainments of a late regatta consisted of a duck hunt, in which a number of ducks were thrown from a boat near the pier into the sea, and that a number of competitors sprang from numerous boats into the sea after the ducks, and that winners comprised the capturers of the largest number of ducks. This was brought to the notice of the magistrates, who refused to interfere with the innocent sport of a set of noodles. Cock-fighting is abolished! Bulls, bears, and badgers we bait no more!! There was a prize fight the other night at Cambridge Hall!!! We progress.

Another fatal accident from Polo. No doubt our manly sports make us a sturdy race; but is it necessary that a sport to be manly should be attended with risk to life?

ABORIGINAL LEGS.—A discovery has lately been made on an island in the Mississippi which shows that the aborigines of America were not wholly unacquainted with mechanical surgery, but occasionally wore wooden legs when deprived of their natural limbs. In a subterranean cave, hewn out of a huge solid rock, which "had undoubtedly been made thousands of years ago," was found, among several other remarkable articles, a skull, as brown as a polished walnut, perfect in every respect, and of extraordinary size; also an almost complete skeleton, with a wooden leg. The fastenings of the artificial limb consisted of petrified leather and bronze buckles. The original leg appears to have been removed half-way between the hip and the knee. This discovery is regarded as extremely interesting, as not only proving that timber extremities were fashionable in the early ages, but that a knowledge of bronze was among the learning of the aborigines. It is, however, rather painful to reflect that the state of society thousands of years ago had not even the redeeming point of being natural, but was artificial, as at present; and that, in honouring the bones of our forefathers, we have often unconsciously been merely honouring their wooden stumps.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER VII.—A DAY WITH THE SCALES
(continued).

FRANK threw open his window to the widest extent, and then sighed, and thought what a pity it was that the even tenour of all our lives should be disturbed by love. It was a glorious morning, and with the burst of soft, flower-scented air that rushed into the room came the sweet matin song of the birds in full chorus from the neighbouring wood.

"I say, Frank, old chap," said Tom, making his appearance by throwing open the door of communication, where he stood framed as he played a duet upon his curly head with a pair of brushes—"I say, old chap, I envy you bumpkins a morning like this. It's almost enough to send a fellow wild. Confound it! I wish I had got up two hours ago."

And then he went to the open window, and gazed with a town-dweller's eyes at the scene before him.

At his feet was the old-fashioned garden, teeming with flowers—not exotics, with terrific names, and looking as if it would be high treason to pick their regal beauties, but simple old flowers, bathed in dew, which lay upon leaf and petal in exquisitely small pearly drops, glittering in the sun with iridescent hues that would throw the richest wrought jewels in the shade. The spiders' weavings were now like tiny-jewelled chains; while every scent-laden rose was heavy with the cloying kisses Nature had bestowed during the night. Roses everywhere—white, pink, and deep blood-red. But the look-out would undoubtedly have won a word of praise from one more hard to please than Tom Phipps—the man given to "loud" shirts and pins, tobacco, and blackened meerschaum pipes.

Tom forgot his dressing, laid down his brushes, leaned out of the window, and looked down upon the quaintly cut beds, filled with pinks and carnations, from amid which shone the rich orange blossoms where the nasturtiums trailed along their pale green stems. The window was wreathed with clematis and jasmine, with here and there a tiny white rose; and at last Tom dragged himself away with a sigh, to take up his brushes again, and say to his neighbour—

"Ah! old chap; this makes me think of the old days, when we used to be rowed for getting our feet soaked in the wet grass, and for picking the flowers not according to law. Ah! Frank, I wish I was a young 'un again."

Here Tom Phipps heaved a deep sigh, and stuck a very ugly fox-head pin in his blue and orange tie.

"Well, if I were you," said Frank, "I'd give up wishing for the impossible, and think of the inevitable. Now, to begin with—suppose you look upon the necessities of life as amongst the inevitable; and take, first, breakfast, which necessitates dressing; and dressing, care, especially in the shaving part—which I see, though, you have done—and care, recollect, begets the nearest approach to perfection, which I know you worship."

Ten minutes after, Tom was sitting at breakfast, with his mouth full of ham, made golden with new-

laid egg, and eating as though a care had never crossed his mind; for Tom could eat, and he did, too, in spite of friendly jokes.

"Never mind the chaff, Tom," said Stephen, after rather a severe onslaught; "you must take in coal, or you would never keep the steam up."

"Oh, I don't mind," said Tom, in a thick voice, and in a tone which bore out his assertion. "I'll trouble you for another cup of coffee, and some more of that home-made cream. Very different stuff to our London shop cream, which they tell us is made of magnesia and gum Arabic. But, I say, you fellows haven't done, have you?"

"Done? yes!"

"Oh, very well," said Tom, coolly—"all right, I haven't; get the car round, and I'll be with you in a minute. Take some prog with you. What? All in, and ready long ago? Ah! well, so am I. All right!"

There was a bright little face to salute at one of the windows, as the dog-cart wheels crunched over the gravel drive; and as it was left behind, Tom Phipps thought, as he rearranged his hat, that the flower at the window was, after all, the sweetest he had seen that morning; and for the space of quite five minutes he was silent and thoughtful.

Off and away, through the bright morning sunshine, with the birds springing right and left from the road as they passed. Tom grew quite excited as they saw, first a brace of partridges skimming over the hedge, and next a fine long-tailed cock pheasant scudding on before the horse for a few yards, to rise, whirling, and dart into the plantation, unharmed by the shot fired after it from a fishing-rod.

Away, by the waving corn, now in full ear, and bending in glorious undulations to the soft passing breeze, which gave to it every tint of green as it swept over the wide expanse. Away, past the oak wood, where the jay screamed harshly, as it was frightened from its verdant fortress. Past green meadows, where the landrail jarred its discordant notes to a far-off respondent mate. Past where the long swathes of grass lay levelled by the mower's scythe. The lark carolled on high, and a light thin mist was rising from the lowlands, and down by where the river's course was marked by the ragged, stunted willow pollards; but beyond taking a good long breath now and then, and agreeing with Tom that it was a jolly morning, the friends paid but small attention to the beauties of nature.

At last the chosen spot upon the river was reached; and the car having been left at the nearest inn, the trio, basket and rod laden, and with a lad bearing a heavily packed hamper, started off for the willow-bordered stream, which glittered in the morning sun. The heavy, over-hanging, and dipping herbage swayed in the swift current, while the water lilies gently rose and sank with the limpid swell, and formed a screen for divers wicked old chub, which lay there in wait for the unfortunate flies which, in the ephemeral innocence of their hearts—if they have any—were disporting themselves upon the surface, from which they were ever and anon snatched, like travellers passing the abode of some German baron of the good old times.

Down by the rushes, Jack—the fresh-water shark—with a few weeds to cover his green back, was, with snaky eye and protruding jaw, grinning and smacking where his lips should have been at the prospect of soon securing some unwary gudgeon. Under the willows, in the bend of the stream, where the waters flowed deeply and slow, the dragon flies rustled and fought, while tiny beetles formed their geometric patterns upon the surface, undisturbed by the rapid skating of the water-spiders. Everywhere the river looked bright, tempting, and, as Tom said, “fishy,” and presented plenty of attractions for any lovers of old Izaak Walton and the gentle craft.

Here, beneath an old alder, the friends pitched, and proceeded to unlimber. Rods were fitted, lines mounted, baits chosen, and each selecting his station, the prey-laden waters were attacked, and for some time the silence remained unbroken.

Patience is proverbial amongst fishermen, and patience was well shown here, for the only breaks in the quiet were for such necessary duties as the tying on of a fresh hook, or the altering of position for the sake of getting a better cast. But after a while there was a halt, on the suggestion of the London visitor.

“I say, boys,” he exclaimed, “this is dry work. Hanging over the water produces a reaction in the body. The fish won’t bite, but ’pon my word I will if you show me a bait.”

But Tom was not as good as his word, for he directly refused the large wriggling worm Stephen dropped before his face. Then came a meeting over the hamper, and the shrieking of a cork under the torture of a screw. “Plop,” and then the “glug-glug” of a foaming bottle of ale, which was discussed, and then pipes were lit and hostilities recommenced.

There was now a pause of fully half an hour, when Tom signalled a bite, and after intense interest of some moments’ duration, a gudgeon was safely landed, amidst plenty of derisive laughter. As for the chub, they would not even look at the bait, but sulkily took themselves off; while the Jack evidently did not mean to be caught upon that day; for though Tom’s gudgeon was carefully and temptingly played about where he had been seen, Jack would not own allegiance to his master, preferring freedom in his native element.

At length, after a most laudable display of patience, exercised through a couple of hours, Stephen proposed a move.

“Let’s try the Priory grounds,” he said. “Old Sir Peter is in town, and where the preserved water runs through the park is quite half a mile from the house. Let’s risk it. The old gentleman would give us leave, and it’s ten to one either of the keepers sees us. I’ll warrant good sport there.”

Frank hung back for a moment, and then acquiesced.

The basket was repacked, and the boy followed with it, grinning hugely when his mouth was not engaged with the wedge of raspberry jam tart he held in his fist. A quarter of an hour brought them to the Priory Park palings, and then, after creeping through a gap, a suitable spot in the

river was chosen, pipes reprimed, and the business of the day recommenced.

Stephen’s warrant proved worthy; for in about a quarter of an hour Tom Phipps hooked what appeared to be a heavy carp, and a sharp struggle ensued.

“Give him line,” cried Frank and Stephen together.

“Can’t,” cried Tom.

And for a very good reason: his line would not run on account of a knot catching in one of the rings of his rod, so he had to follow the fish as well as he could in its wild evolutions, principally up stream, where it was evidently making for some rather evil-looking lilies and stout water weeds. Then there was a sharp struggling splash in amongst the water plants; something which sounded exceedingly like an oath; and then Tom Phipps stood with one leg in the mud, his line broken, and the carp most probably returned in a very fluttered and excited condition to the bosom of its family, with the ornamentation of a Kirby hook in its mouth, and trailing away, comet fashion, some three yards of line behind.

Tom polished the fetid black mud from off his trousers and boot, fitted on a fresh line, and sitting down to recommence, stretched out his leg in the sun to dry.

It was now getting towards mid-day, and as if to make up for previous disappointment, the fun grew fast and furious. Stephen was up to his elbows in fish slime, while Tom was in ecstasies.

“One o’clock prompt, as we say in the City,” exclaimed the latter. “My stores require replenishing, and I see that young vampire has emptied out the hamper. After all said and done, there’s nothing like country air for giving a fellow an appetite.”

“Got a bite,” whispered Frank, in a low tone.

“Wish I had,” said Tom, going up to him, accompanied by Stephen.

Frank’s bite was followed by a seizure, and as the biter was making off, he was hooked, and then, showing his yellow side for a moment, he darted up stream for the weeds where Tom’s friend had been lost: but there was a different man at the rod; the line was free, and went whirring and singing off the winch for about forty yards, when with a gentle hand the prey was checked, and turned down stream again, but only to make a vigorous dart once more in the former direction. However, the struggles were in vain, and five minutes’ tussle made the poor fish, as the “Angler’s Guide” says, fit for the landing-net, held ready by Tom Phipps, and then, panting upon the grass, lay in all its golden beauty a fine three-pound carp.

“Ho!” said a gruff voice behind the anglers, “so I’m jest in time. P’raps you’ll—”

“Hullo!” exclaimed Tom, with praiseworthy promptitude, “just in time you are. How d’y’e do, old boy? Take a sup?”

And he thrust a wicker-covered flask into the new-comer’s hand.

“But yer know,” said the keeper, for such his velveteens, gun, and gaiters testified to his being—“but yer know—”

"Oh, it's all right," said Tom; "play up, it's rale Irish."

The keeper looked for the moment quite astounded at this effrontery. He stared at Tom, then at the fish, then at the rest of the party, then at the goodly display of edibles upon the grass beneath a shady oak, and then again at the wicker flask in his hand. He gave the spirit a half shake, when the gurgling, jingling laugh the poteen imp gave within quite overcame his resolution. It was a direct temptation; and with an infant-like effort he took the neck of the flask within his lips, and—

He kept it there.

The gentle spirit seemed to have a soothing effect upon the hard man of the world: the lines in his countenance grew softer, and, as an infant after a similar effort, he became calm and placid.

Upon removing the flask, and handing it back to Tom, the keeper leaned upon his gun for a minute, and gazed at the scaly trophies upon the grass, which seemed to bring him back again to a sense of duty, for he proceeded to address the party with—

"Well, gentlemen, I've come to—"

"Yes," said Tom, taking him up again very short, "and you're just in time. Sit down, old fellow. That's your sort. Lay your gun there. Draw up a little closer. Come, Frank—Steve. Here, young vampire, bring two of those bottles over. Come, gentlemen, lunch. Now, Mr.—er—what did you say your name was?"

"Call me Sporrige—Thomas Sporrige," said the new-comer.

"Just so," said Tom. "Then what shall it be, Mr. Sporrige—cold chicken and tongue, or pigeon pie?"

But without waiting for any response, Tom hacked off a wing and leg from the cold fowl, cut off the point of the tongue, and dabbed all upon a plate, which, with knife, fork, and condiments, he set before the astonished keeper, who had certainly seated himself, but was evidently wavering in his mind as to the course he ought to pursue.

However, example is said to be better than precept; so, following the pattern set by the rest of the party, Mr. Sporrige commenced business by very awkwardly fumbling the flesh off the fowl's wing.

"Glass of bitter with you, Mr. Sporrige," said Frank, to help out the proceedings; for the keeper did not seem at all comfortable.

"I'll join you," said Stephen.

"And I," said Tom, with his mouth full.

Down went the keeper's knife and fork, and rasp went the back of his hand across his mouth; and then the foaming ale was distributed, and the edibles again attacked, when Mr. Sporrige seemed somewhat easier in his mind; for, bending to circumstances and disdaining the luxuries of civilization, he drew his whittle from his pocket, pushed the knife and fork aside, placed the chicken leg and lump of tongue upon a goodly slice of bread, and then began to make some progress with the more solid part of the *al fresco* banquet.

"That's your style!" said Tom, approvingly. "I like to see a man make himself at home. Nothing like a raw nip for an appetizer. Feel better after that taste from the flask—don't you?"

Mr. Sporrige gave a nod and a grunt, for he was too busy to speak; he picked the fowl bones with evident gusto, after which he had another help and some more tongue, of which he seemed to approve amazingly. He then, incited to the feat by Tom Phipps, scraped out the pigeon-pie dish, eating with the random fragments therein a goodly piece of the fat from the thick end of the tongue. Then followed a large triangle of raspberry jam open tart, six cheese-cakes, a piece of "cow-pie," *alias* custard, and a knobby crust and bit of cheese; the whole washed down with copious draughts of bottled ale. Two or three times did he shake his head like a prisoned bull, and glance over his shoulder at the fish; but then the bonds were so gentle, and Tom Phipps was always ready to play Ganymede to the replenishing of his glass; so that by the time the party had well satisfied the pangs of hunger, the unwelcome visitor was quite willing to sit down beneath the oak in a comfortable spot, and aid digestion by filling his pipe with some of Tom's choice Bristol bird's-eye.

The latter gentleman supplied the keeper with a light, started his own pipe, and then, as coolly as could be, took advantage of his victory by sitting down upon the bank right in front of the velveted incubus, and set an example to his companions by beginning to fish.

Mr. Sporrige removed his pipe from his mouth, stuck his head on one side, and then, with his face screwed up, seemed to say, "He's a nice 'un, aint he?" He then looked at Frank, pointed towards the fisherman with the short stem of his black pipe, gave a succession of winks and nods, and then shook his head slowly for quite a minute. At last, with a very thick utterance, and quite an effort—

"Blest if ever I was taken in like this here afore," he said, "and I'm blest if I kears how soon I'm took again."

He then chuckled for a few moments, replaced his pipe between his lips, and smoked away with all the solidity of a Dutch burgher.

A roar of laughter followed this remark, but Mr. Sporrige did not join in, but sat calmly smoking; for he was evidently in a meditative mood. So the fishing went on without let or hindrance for some time, when all at once the keeper again removed his pipe, and pointing with it in the direction of a willow pollard, he said—

"Shouldn't wonder, if one o' you gents was to try arter a jack down by that tree, you might kitch one."

The sequel proved that Mr. Sporrige was right in his surmise, for half an hour after Stephen drew a fine pike to land. They then fished on with varying success till towards five o'clock, when a large eel which Tom Phipps bagged, or rather basketed, after getting his line into a most outrageous tangle, served to bring the day's sport to a conclusion. So, packing up tackle and fish, they had a parting glass with the keeper, before starting the boy off for the inn with the lightened hamper, Tom having re-corked and sent the empty ale bottles down the stream to spread the name of Bass.

Upon reaching the palings, Mr. Sporrige kindly helped them over with the heavy fish panniers, when

Tom lagged behind for a moment with the keeper, who dropped something into his pocket which went "chink," and then, keeping his hand there, he wagged his head knowingly from side to side, and by way of valediction jerked out to Tom—

"You're a nice sorter young gent, you air."

The shades of night were falling fast, much after the same fashion, no doubt, as they do in Alpine villages, when the fishing party passed through Waveley on their way to the Hall, where, over a late dinner, they amused the Squire with an account of the day's adventures with Mr. Sporrige.

"Confound him, sir!" said the Squire. "He had better not come to me for a situation if the Admiral discharges him at any time. I don't know now that I shan't write to his master."

"No, you won't do that, sir," said Tom, "for my sake."

The Squire looked at Tom, with a grim smile wrinkling up his features; but he contented himself with a sonorous "Humph!" and then paid attention to his port.

CHAPTER VIII.—BRIMSTONE ON MATCHES.

"GOING where?" said Sampson Elton.

"To the match," said Frank, quietly.

It was breakfast time at the cottage, on the second day after the fishing excursion. Frank and Sampson were keeping Mrs. Elton busily employed in supplying their wants; so busily, indeed, that she could hardly get any breakfast herself. The demands for bread and butter, coffee, cream, sugar, &c., were incessant; for both gentlemen were early risers, and ate heartily when they met at table. There was no hock, no soda water, no *paté de foie gras*; no Fortnum and Mason or Morel ideas of what a breakfast should be, but such a *déjeuner à la fourchette* as Mrs. Elton thought it right at all times to put upon the table—a repast which included eggs, brawn, cheek, and a large flagon of ale.

"Going where?" growled Sampson, with his mouth full of brawn, taking a loud "suss" out of his cup, and at the same time adding to his generally sinister aspect by squinting horribly at his coffee.

"To the match," said Frank, quietly.

"Match! what match?" said Sampson.

"Waveley *versus* Edgeton," said Frank, breaking the top of an egg.

"Oh! cricket match!" snarled Sampson. "Lucifer match. A parcel of fools running after a ball, like kittens after worsted. Cricket! Humph! Ah! they did not play cricket in my young days."

"Perhaps not, sir," said Frank, in a very dignified manner; "but then we think differently now; and as it is generally allowed that about ninety-five per cent. of our male population belong to the class which you stigmatize as fools—that is to say, do not come up to your standard of moral excellence—it is only natural that the match should embrace a number of the foolish; although, perhaps, they may be wise in their own conceit. But then philanthropists consider they are doing good by encouraging manly sports—that is, in winning the youth of our time from the clay pipe and beer pot of your time."

Now this sounded all very well; but Frank spoiled

his moral diatribe by taking up the silver flagon, and having a hearty draught; and he also quite omitted to cast a glance at the place where his meerschau was standing in one corner of the book-shelf.

"It is calculated," continued Frank, returning the flagon to its place—"it is calculated that these muscle-demanding sports teach people to become, at all events, sober-minded fools, with active, healthy bodies, and cool heads to contain what little wit they possess."

"Humph!" said Sampson.

While Mrs. Elton quite hugged herself upon her son's ability to cope with the household bear.

Frank finished his egg, and helped himself to a fine jellified piece of brawn, and then continued, with his mouth somewhat full for a University man—but then, perhaps, he thought that when at Rome he might do as Rome did, and, consequently, was not so particular as he might have been.

"You see, sir," said Frank, "the game is greatly encouraged at the Universities, as one of the most manly of our sports, while the training necessary for a man to excel in the pastime makes him active, keen-sighted, cool, and calculating; bold, and fit for any emergency. The wicket-keeper in a match is like a skilful general, and places his men according to the strength or tactics of his enemy. Cricket is a noble game, sir; and I'm sure you would feel all the better for witnessing the efforts of our village to meet the prowess of Edgeton to-day. Lord Furrowdell, Sir Peter, Mr. Glebeley, and many others lend their countenance to the proceedings, as does every man of sense and good feeling; though not himself a cricketer, yet he can look upon the enjoyment of others with—"

"Have you nearly done, *Mister Henderson*?" said Sampson.

"Oh! yes, I've done," said Frank.

"Because," said Sampson, "I want to go to work; and I believe you once told me that gentlemen did not interrupt a speaker."

"I believe that I did make such a remark," said Frank, smiling in spite of himself.

"Truly thankful, Amen!" said Sampson, with only the whites of his eyes visible.

And then he left the room, greatly to the comfort of Mrs. Elton, who had been on thorns lest some warmth of expression might follow the dissertation on cricket; for, poor woman, in spite of her son's forbearance, she had often, after having been the cause of hot words, to act as mediator.

Frank settled himself down in the bay window, and was soon deep in a geological treatise, considering the possibility of the lake system of Switzerland being antecedent to the post-tertiary glaciers; with a lively description of moraines, loess, boulders, striation, angularity, etcetera, et cetera; and dipping at times into eocene, pliocene, pleistocene, and miocene, all of which appeared to give the reader the most intense satisfaction—the book seeming to partake of the powers of the ostrich gizzard, and acting as a digester of the mighty breakfast of which the student had so lately partaken.

Now it has before been rather broadly hinted that Mrs. Elton was not what the world would call a

clever person, and, poor woman, she knew it well—knew, too, what a blank she had drawn in the matrimonial lottery; but she was clever in her way, as every one testified who had partaken of her dinners, or tasted her confectionery and home-made wines; or as those could tell who had been unfortunate enough to be ill, yet fortunate enough to have had Mrs. Elton's hand to smooth their pillow. She was clever in her way, and above all a most profound reverer of the goddess Minerva, so that Frank had only to take up a book to ensure the floor being traversed on tip-toe, and Mary, the maid, scolded for singing in the kitchen.

But with a cricket match to come off, and the possibility of there being ladies upon the ground to watch the efforts of the players, it was not likely that Frank would be in a very studious humour that morning; and about ten o'clock he leaped up, banged down the book with a vigour which made Mrs. Elton jump in her seat, calmed her with a kiss, and then hurried out of the room. In a quarter of an hour he returned, equipped for the struggle in the proper white flannel affected by men of the bat and the ball, and looking like a clean plasterer, as Mrs. Elton told Mary in confidence—Mary, on the strength of having nursed Master Frank as a baby, taking great interest in her "dear boy." But Frank now stood armed for the contest, with all the necessary pads and gloves, sheathing and bandaging his favourite bat, till required for protecting his hands and legs from the blows of that bruise-begetter so ubiquitous in the game of cricket. For Frank was a great gun in the Waveley eleven—a man in whom much faith was placed, perhaps more than in Stephen Vaughan, the captain; for the student, though learned with his book, was said to be mighty in leg hits, quick at point, a fearful screw bowler, and altogether one held in the especial abomination of the enemy.

"Now, about dinner, my dear?" said Mrs. Elton.

"Well, Mums," said Frank, smiling, "about dinner?"

"What time will you be back, my dear?"

"That's a question it would puzzle me to answer, Mums. It all depends upon the match; but don't wait, for I shall most likely have a snack afterwards with Tom Phipps and Stephen."

"And then be coming home tired and ill for want of proper meals," said Mrs. Elton.

"To the best of mothers, to nurse me," said Frank.

"But Frank, dear," said Mrs. Elton, "did you do what I told you? Now, do speak to him about it, or I'm sure—"

But those last words had sent Frank off without a word of farewell; and Mrs. Elton went sighing back to maid Mary in the culinary regions.

A MILKMAN was lately seeking the aid of the police to trace the whereabouts of a family who had left the neighbourhood, owing him eighteen shillings. "Well, I suppose there was nine shillings' worth of water in that milk account," remarked the inspector. "That's where it galls me—that's where it hurts," replied the dealer. "They were new customers, and I hadn't commenced to water the milk yet!"

A French Poacher.

BANG!

It was the report of a gun, and a young fawn, which had bounded from the dark recesses of the forest into an open glade, where the soft moonlight fell, silvering the dead leaves on the ground, gave a sudden start, stood still for an instant, and then fell on its side.

"We've caught the vagabond at last," whispered one *garde-chasse* to another, where they were concealed in the deep shadow of some trees; while as quietly as possible he descended from his horse—for they were mounted.

"Here, catch hold of these."

And, giving the other his reins to hold, he peered through the bushes. As he did so, a man emerged from the darkness, gave a quick glance round, and then picking up the fawn, examined it, to see if it was dead. The *garde-chasse* sprang forward, when the sound made the poacher turn. In a second he dropped the animal, and presented his double-barrelled gun, the first barrel of which had put an end to the existence of the poor little creature at his feet.

His eyes glared wildly from beneath his unkempt hair, and his whole appearance bespoke so desperate a determination not to be taken, that the keeper drew back for an instant, hesitating, for he had not anticipated resistance.

"Come a step nearer," said the poacher, "and you are a dead man."

"You dare not," cried the other, with a sudden movement to seize him.

There was a second report, a heavy fall, and the poacher, seizing the fawn, disappeared into the darkness, followed by a shot from the second *garde-chasse*. This latter then tied the horses to a tree, and now raised the head of his fallen companion.

"Are you hurt, Chaumont?" he asked, anxiously.

"The villain has killed me, Adolphe," said the other, feebly, with his hand pressed to his side.

At that instant there was a light footstep heard, and an exclamation of horror made the man addressed as Adolphe look up, when, to his astonishment, he saw before him a girl of twenty, her handsome gipsy-like features distorted with fright, and looking ashy white in the moonlight.

"Oh, Pierre!" she uttered, clasping her hands in an agony, "what is this you have done?"

Then, throwing herself on her knees, she took the keeper's head on her knee.

"Let me hold him. Can you do nothing for him?" she cried. "Have you no brandy or anything? Ah, poor man! he is dying! Oh, why do you not fetch help?"

Her tears fell fast, but Adolphe paid no heed to her, for he knew well that ere he could return with help it would be too late; so he only held his friend's hand, and leaned over him to catch the words that fell almost inaudibly from his lips.

"My poor father, Adolphe—he has no one—"

"I will care for him," was the answer, in a low tone; and a slight pressure of the hand showed that the reply was heard.

The girl, with a trembling hand, snatched a little crucifix from her breast, and held it before his eyes.

Then she put it to his lips, before laying his head gently on the ground.

Then, feeling the hand relax its grasp of his own, Adolphe knew that all was over. He looked up at the girl, whose tears still fell slowly.

"Go, child, and inform the gendarmes of this. I will stay here till you bring assistance."

His tone was authoritative, and she sprang to her feet, darting away down the beaten path, to be lost to sight in an instant.

"The cowardly wretch!" murmured the keeper to himself when she was gone. "But I will bring him to justice. My poor Chaumont!—he shall suffer for this. I will think of nothing else till he is punished."

He rose, and walked up and down, to try and get rid of the feeling of faintness that had come over him. A neigh from close at hand recalled his attention to the horses, and he unfastened them.

"You may find your way home," he said, aloud.

And the intelligent animals, anxious to get to their stables, set off at a trot.

This scene occurred in the outskirts of a forest in the south of France—a lonely, picturesque region, where rugged crags peered out from among the trees every here and there. The silence was profound, as there was no wind.

DubARRIER sat down on the root of a tree, a few yards from where the other lay so still, and, burying his face in his hands, was almost equally motionless.

The moon sank lower and lower; the wood grew darker, until there was no light but the "cold light of stars." After a while, distant voices made him look up, and he sprang to his feet with a shiver of horror—the darkness was so thick around him, and the twinkling orbs in the sky did not suffice to show him the form of his unfortunate friend. However, as he remained rooted to the spot, the voices came nearer, there was a glimmer of lanterns, and in another minute he was surrounded by a band of gendarmes, who had been led to the place by the brave girl, who now, pale and frightened, stood looking on. Two men had brought a litter for poor Chaumont. They laid him on it, and were leaving the place, when the *garde-chasse* turned to look for the girl, who was standing in the background.

"Are you not coming with us?" he asked.

"No, monsieur."

"Why, you cannot stay here alone?"

"I am going home."

"And where is your home, my girl? What is your name?"

"Jeannette Lestranger," she said, answering the last question only.

He offered her some money.

"You must let me thank you for what you have done to-night."

"Yes, but not like that," she answered. "Good night, monsieur."

"I will find some way to thank you, my brave Jeannette, before I am many days older," he said, hurriedly.

But, hardly waiting to hear his reply, she ran off, and vanished into the darkness.

She knew her way so well, that she needed no light, and after pursuing the forest paths for a mile or

thereabouts, she came out into the open road. After following this for a little while, she turned up a narrow lane, and soon came to a wretched, tumble-down cottage, apparently deserted. She entered, and in one room found a feeble light burning. On a rudely constructed couch lay a man, his face hidden.

"Pierre," she said, softly.

He looked up at her, showing a very pale and haggard countenance.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked. "Are you ill? Oh, Pierre, do you know what you've done?"

For answer, he pointed to his arm, which was roughly bandaged.

"That scoundrel of a *garde-chasse* shot me here."

Without another word, she busied herself about him, bathing the wound, and binding it up with the greatest care and tenderness. When she had finished, she said, in a low voice—

"That poor man is dead."

"It was his own fault. What were you out there for?"

"I came to tell you that the *gardes-chasses* were on the look-out. I had seen them."

There was a short silence, and then he said—

"We must be off again at dawn, Jeannette. Go and get some sleep till then."

He would have kissed her, but she shrank from him, with a strange look on her face.

The first gleam of light saw these two emerge from the hut. The man gave her a searching look.

"What is wrong with you, girl? Don't you want to leave this place? Stay, if you like."

"No, no, Pierre—I will never leave you."

It was two or three days afterwards that DubARRIER slowly climbed a steep cliff to where, on the summit, stood the ruins of an old château.

"The gendarmes will not be here for half an hour the way they are coming," he muttered. "Can I secure him myself? I am armed. Well—I'll risk it."

He went cautiously round by the back of the ruin, and entering, came suddenly upon the man he sought, stretched on the ground in sleep. He cocked his gun, presented it at the recumbent figure, and then touched him with his foot to wake him. He sprang up in an instant, dashed the gun on one side, and the next minute the two men were engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand struggle for the mastery. At last Pierre was thrown to the ground, and DubARRIER, panting and pale with rage, stood with his foot on the other's chest.

"So I have you at last! Villain! Murderer!"

A scream made him start and look round, to behold Jeannette in the entrance, her hands clasped wildly together. This momentary diversion was taken advantage of by the prostrate man, who scrambled up again; and the struggle was renewed, with the same result as before.

"Jeannette," he panted, as he lay this time with the knee of the *garde-chasse* on his chest—"the gun—fire at him—quick!—before any more come."

DubARRIER looked round at her in alarm. He was entirely at the girl's mercy should she be capable of such an act. But he had misjudged her. She gave a hasty glance from the doorway, and then approached him with a look of wild entreaty.

"Oh! let him go; the gendarmes are coming. Pray, pray let him go!—he is my brother."

"Let him go!—Never," he answered, coldly and firmly.

The poor girl burst into tears, and threw herself on her knees before him.

"Have pity! Give him one chance more for his life, for they will kill him. Did you not say you would thank me for what I did for you?"

"You ask too much, Jeannette," said Dubarrier, hoarsely. "For your sake, I wish I could; but I cannot do it."

He looked at her as he spoke, but he could not resist her agonized looks, and, actuated by a sudden impulse, he released his prisoner.

"Go, then, and quick, or it will be too late!"

The girl caught his rough, brown hand in hers, and kissed it. Then she hurried out, to be met by a party of gendarmes.

"Is he here?" asked the first eagerly, as he caught sight of the *garde-chasse*.

Dubarrier hesitated.

"He has been here; but—we are too late."

The other stared at him, and then round the place.

"Whose gun is that? Did you not see him?"

"Yes," said the keeper, suddenly recollecting that he might be charged with conniving at the escape of a criminal. "I had caught him; but he succeeded in getting away."

The officer of gendarmes was evidently not quite satisfied. He would have said more, but was interrupted by a sudden shout outside of—

"There he is!"

They hastened out, and the officer joined the rest directly in the pursuit. About a quarter of a mile from them, running along the path on the edge of the cliff, with on one side a precipitous descent, and on the other sloping walls of rock rising high above his head, could be seen the figure of the poacher. He had trusted to his nerve, and did not think the gendarmes would dare to follow on so dangerous a path. But he was mistaken, for, without a moment's hesitation, they all dashed on after him.

Dubarrier and Jeannette stood, following them with their eyes—the girl almost fainting with fright, the keeper pale and trembling from head to foot with excitement.

Suddenly the poacher turned, saw his pursuers gaining on him, and—

"Ah, *mon Dieu*!" gasped Adolphe, "Chaumont is avenged!"

As he spoke, there was a kind of sigh, and Jeannette lay on the ground senseless.

He lifted her gently, carried her inside the ruins, and laid her tenderly on the ground.

"Poor child!" he murmured.

And, bending, pressed his lips to her forehead.

A month later there was a simple wedding in the forest church, and Jeannette found a protector in an honest man.

"WHAT branches of learning have you been pursuing at school to-day?" said a father to his son. "None in particular, sir; but a birch branch has been pursuing me."

A Chinese Legend.

THE other morning, when the keen air and raw wind made gloves and overcoats a necessity, a Baxter-street Chinaman stood before a Chatham-street clothing store, and shivered in his thin cambric coat. He fastened his queer eyes on an overcoat at the door, and the look on his face showed that he was searching for something of the kind.

"Nice goat—shust a fit—sheap in brice, and off der most exquisite quality; six dollar dakes it," explained the clothier.

"Ugh! ugh!" shivered the Chinaman, smiling blandly, as if he wanted to convey the idea that it was a warm morning.

"You need dot goat," continued the dealer; "you are shust freezing to bieces in your tracks."

"Thlee dlollar nuff, alle same," replied the Chinaman, drawing his sleeve across his forehead, as if to wipe away perspiration.

"Go away, you man from Shina!—go away to some shtore vere dey haf sheap, shoddy goods," exclaimed the clothier.

John passed on, turned the corner, and as the wind from the river struck him in a new place, he jumped clear from the walk, and his teeth struck together. He turned back, and as he neared the clothier's he removed his hat, and fanned himself.

"Do you want dot goat or not?" asked the dealer.

"Mush hotee to-day," replied John, still fanning himself and puffing heavily.

"How can you call such vedder hot? Hefens alive! but I haf seven stoafs going up-stairs to keep my family warm. Being dat you are from Shina, you can haf dot goat for fife dollar."

"Woosh! more hotee. Fo' dlollar plenty nuff."

"Four dollar! do you pelief dot same goat cost me seven gold dollar last week? Walk on, Mister Shinaman."

The Chinaman walked.

The wind blew down his back, and around his ribs, and a tear-drop gathered on his nose. He must have an overcoat at some price, and he again turned about.

"So you haf come for dot nice goat?" queried the dealer, as he met him again.

"Awful hotee!" gasped John, wiping his face, and fanning himself.

"My hefens! put what a queer peoples dose folks are," sighed the dealer.

"Fo' dlollar and halfy plenty nuffy, alle same," said John, looking at the coat.

"My souls, my souls! but dese sheap brices will preak me down before night. Howefor, I must haf money to bay my taxes, and dot goat is yours."

"Big hotee—woosh!" exclaimed John, as he counted out the money, and saw the coat come down.

"A more elegant fit I never haf seen," said the dealer, as he put the coat on the Chinaman's back. "I drow off a dollar and a half, because you say it is such hot wedder with you."

John moved out to the kerbstone, made a graceful bow, and, as he secured the last button, he waved his hand and chuckled—

"It's muchee cold alle time."

The Penalty of a Borrowed Umbrella.

MR. COBLEIGH'S neighbour, Mr. Fenning, borrowed his umbrella several weeks ago. Mr. Cobleigh mentioned to him that the bone handle on the stick was loose, and inclined to slip off; he apologetically explained that he meant to fix it, but it had been forgotten.

Mr. Fenning said he would be careful.

He was busy marketing, and, getting his bundles in his arms, he grasped the umbrella by the stick, above the bone handle, and was sallying along, when the handle slipped off, and fell upon the pavement. He didn't want to do it, but he had to set the bundles down until he could recover and replace the handle. While he was doing it, he commented pretty severely upon a man who would lend such an umbrella to a neighbour who had always treated him like a man.

He returned the umbrella, and shortly after Mr. Cobleigh had occasion to use it. He found the handle was still loose.

"Well, I declare," he said to his wife, "that Fenning is a nice fellow not to fix this umbrella handle, when he had the use of it. If I borrowed an umbrella, and it could be fixed so easily as this, I should have done it. I think that it is the least a man might do."

And Mr. Cobleigh was really disappointed in Mr. Fenning.

When the next storm came on, luck would have it that Mr. Fenning should be making a call on Mr. Cobleigh, prior to going down town after the groceries. He borrowed Mr. Cobleigh's umbrella, and went his way. The handle did not give way for some reason; and this fact, with the lapse of time, made Mr. Fenning forget about the other experience.

He had just got out of the shop with his parcels when a heavy shower of rain descended. He started to quicken his speed, holding the umbrella high up the stick, so to bring the shelter of the alpaca as close about him as possible, when the handle slipped off and rolled across the pavement.

He stooped down to pick it up, his face flashing with anger and mortification, when a package of rice fell from his grasp and split open on the ground. In a spasmodic effort to save the rice, a pound of coffee lost its hold on his arm, and it was soon mingling with the rice and the rain. Then the umbrella tipped over and knocked off his hat, and in a spasm of bewilderment, which will sometimes come to a man in such a climax, his muscles relaxed, and the balance of his goods dropped on to the wet pavement.

Sympathizing beholders came to his help, and righted the umbrella, while he picked up those things which could be saved. He would not return the umbrella himself, but sent it home by a boy.

He said to his wife, among other things, that he always knew Cobleigh was careless and lazy, but he never thought before that the man was criminally negligent.

It rained this morning, and Mr. Cobleigh was coming down the street under his umbrella, when, as he got in front of our office, the handle fell off in

the mud. He came in to get some waste paper with which to wipe it, when he said—

"I must mend this umbrella to-day. I have lent it to Fenning several times, and hang me if he was man enough to do it!"

Under the Yellow Flag.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER I.

THERE'S a bright golden head, whose threads of silver are few, pressed to mine as I sit writing, and a pair of hands upon my shoulders; while more than once a tear has fallen on the paper. When I said that I would tell it all, Eve pressed one hand upon mine, and gazed in my face with that old, well-remembered look that met my eyes when we stood on the threshold waiting for the opening of death's door, after bidding farewell to each other and to the world. But she said little, beyond asking me whether it would be wise to lay bare once more wounds that, even though healed by time, yet displayed terrible scars that can never be effaced—whether it were just to myself to tear aside the curtain of the past, and torture my heart with its recollections; to which I replied, sternly, that it was a duty to the dead. Had she said it would pain her, I would have refrained; but it seems to me that the thoughts which press upon my brain should be committed to paper, and that I shall feel lighter, happier, it may be better, if, even thus tardily, I chronicle the last days of Paul Graham.

I have long ago confessed to my weakness, and suspicions void of base. Besides that, I have more than once told her that she made an erring choice between her two suitors; but I know too well her content. In bygone fable we read of three wishes being accorded to men, and were such things possible I would pray, not for three wishes, but for one—that I might see Paul Graham once in the flesh, and say—

"Forgive me, I was blind."

And yet it were needless, for I know that I am forgiven.

Twenty years ago I stood flushed, then pale, and with the veins in my forehead swelled almost to bursting: jealousy, madness, rage, disappointment, all attacked me by turn, as, looking through the leafy screen spread before a window opening upon a conservatory, I saw Paul Graham, my friend—the friend of the house—standing with Eve's hand in his, speaking low and earnestly, while her face being turned from me, I could not see its expression. Two hours before it had been decided that at a fortnight's end she was to be my wife, and that we were to sail for England, where I was to manage the London business of the house to which, after ten years' probation, I was to be admitted as junior partner.

Eve Herries was to be my wife, and her father's last words to me that day had been—

"I could not have parted with her, William, if I had not meant to join you before the year is ended."

And now, when I was to receive the prize of my long patient love and energy, to place myself in a

position to claim my heart's desire, I stood gazing through the leaves at a scene that sent the blood rushing to my heart.

I knew that it was cowardly, mean, and contemptible, but I stepped softly forward to try and catch what was said, when I heard my name uttered, and turning, saw Mr. Herries standing at another door.

"I thought Eve and Graham were here," he said. "Have you seen them?"

Before I could reply, they came in from the conservatory—Eve, with heightened colour, to walk straight to me, and lay her hand upon my arm; Graham, to avoid my fierce glance, and to turn to Mr. Herries, and engage with him in conversation. For Paul Graham was to take my place in superintending at Canton the shipping transactions of Herries, Lingon, and Company.

I was very still, hardly speaking; and I could see from time to time that Eve's eyes were turned curiously towards mine, as if seeking to know what I had seen or what I had heard. But when she spoke it was in a quiet, trusting way that went straight to my heart; so that at last I found myself thinking that she was either the truest-hearted woman in the world, or else the most deceitful; and the next minute asking myself how I could be so base as to harbour an unalloyed thought against her. I felt so cut that I would not even revert to what I had seen, and during the rest of the evening chatted happily first with one and then with another, leaving at the same time as Paul Graham, and walking part of the way home in his company; but when I offered my hand at parting, he took it in a slow, constrained, thoughtful fashion, pressing it, however, in a hearty handshake, and then turning hastily away.

"Perhaps he loves her too, poor fellow," I muttered, as I walked on through the still night to my home; and as I thought that, it was with a feeling of sincere pity; while, trying to imagine our positions reversed, I thought of what my own sufferings would have been, and once more I could not help muttering, "Poor fellow!"

I was quite at ease now, quite happy; and I told myself that, unaware of our engagement, he had been speaking to Eve that evening, and that sooner or later she would tell me all about it; for of course she could not say a word when he was present. And then I smiled to think how ready I had been to take fire, and reaching the house, hurried in, to see Eve's daguerreotype likeness before me, while I smoked a cigar before retiring for the night, and then, as I threw away the end, I once more said—but this time aloud—"Poor fellow!"

CHAPTER II.

FOURTEEN weary days passed—days that seemed as if they would never come to an end; and yet every hour was busily occupied from morn till night; for I had plenty of preparations to make, and all my spare time to spend at Mr. Herries' house. The conservatory scene was almost forgotten; Eve had not once referred to it. I knew that Graham had not been to the house since; and when I asked him to come as one of my friends to the wedding, he declined quietly, and I did not press him.

But at last the day arrived; and, towards evening, I stood with my young wife upon the deck of the *Huntingtower*, full-rigged ship, waving adieu to the party that were returning ashore.

The breeze was light; but as stunsail after stunsail was lowered and sheeted home, the huge tealaden vessel began to bend slightly over, the water to ripple more swiftly beneath the bows, and the harbour and its white houses to glide from us like objects in some bright panorama. Far above us first one and then another faint star began to twinkle in the soft grey sky, whose pearly tints gave place, by endless gradations, to the richest orange where the sun had lately dipped. Then, as we stood watching the changes, the bright hues deepened into purple, and the sky became one glorious arch of diamond points.

We lingered there hour after hour, till the busy confusion on deck gave place to a calm consonant with the stillness overhead. The rest of the passengers had descended one after another; and at last, fearing that the night air, deliciously cool though it was, might prove hurtful, we followed the companions of our voyage below.

There was less confusion in the state cabin than might have been expected. A comfortable meal—half supper, half tea—was spread; and a bustling, twinkling-eyed little woman, in black silk, who seemed quite at home, came trotting across to meet us, taking my wife from me, and settling her at the upper end of the table by her side. She talked incessantly, ordering the steward here and there, and treating the passengers as if they were old friends. I was naturally glad to see the many little attentions paid to Eve; and the captain descending to take a place by my side, I entered into conversation with him.

"Do you know the lady at the head of the table?" I inquired.

"What, your partner, Mr. Leslie? Yes, the most charming—"

"No, no, the little twinkling-eyed woman in black silk—black silk of Canton?"

"H'm, no, don't know her," said Captain Black, drily. "Passenger, I expect."

A short, cackling laugh on my left drew my attention to a yellow, spectacled gentleman, who was chuckling at the captain's speech, and gazing at him in a meaning way.

"Bad as you were when I came out, Black—every bit," he said.

"Your tea isn't sweet enough, Mr. Stayman," said the captain, gruffly. "Here, Jenny, give me a cup of tea, please, and pass Mr. Stayman the sugar."

The little woman looked, smiled, and nodded, and executed her commissions per the steward, afterwards whispering to my wife, and nodding towards where we were seated.

"You'd better—sugar? No, too sweet already—better ask the lady at the head of the table if she knows our worthy captain, sir," said Mr. Stayman, addressing me. "I fancy my wife would not be best pleased if I were to make such a cryptogamian remark."

"Cold chicken, sir?" said the steward, handing a plate to the captain.

"Chicken, Harris? No, thanky," was the reply. I looked at the steward, caught his eye, and shook my head, thinking that the man was making a mistake, but he paid no heed to my glance; while the yellow passenger showed a horribly irregular set of teeth, and grinned at my astonished look, as the steward set the cold chicken before the captain, who immediately began to eat.

"I see you don't know our friend, the captain," said Mr. Stayman; "he's slightly eccentric."

"P'raps so," said the gentleman spoken of; "so's everybody, or else we shouldn't have gentlemen coming out to China for the sake of a few seeds and grasses, eh, Mr. Stayman? But my wife don't think me eccentric. 'Nother cup of tea, Jenny," he shouted; and then to me, "Peck away, sir, and set a good example to the other passengers. Get them out of the doldrums. I'm always glad to see the first few days over, and folks shaken into shape."

"Sugar, Charley?" squeaked the little woman.

"No, thanky," said the captain; and I saw two large lumps dropped in, then a smile and a whisper to my wife, as the cup was passed to the steward.

The next few days were passed in the midst of pretty rough weather, during which there was a tolerable amount of discomfort on board; but at the end of a week, light breezes prevailing, the passengers revived as if by magic, and the brightness of the evening on the eighth day out brought nearly every one on deck, and we returned to our cabin that night thinking that, after all, our voyage might not turn out so miserable as it had at first threatened. The yellow, bilious-looking passenger had proved to be a crotchety but thoroughly scholarly gentleman; the captain, a bluff, obstinate Englishman, with a whim for making black out to be white; his wife, a quaint, but amiable little body, imbued with the idea—and most thoroughly too—that there was not such another man in the world as her husband, whom she accompanied in all his voyages; while as to the rest of the passengers, they seemed to be about the same as passengers on board a homeward-bound ship generally are.

But I had yet to make the acquaintance of the crew; for in a long voyage such as ours was to be, even the smallest ship's boy becomes an object of interest to you, playing as he does a part, even though it be a minor one, in protecting you from the perils of the sea.

"Now, then, Teapot, look out!" cried a sailor's voice as I stepped on deck soon after sunrise, when the vessel seemed to be floating in a sea of liquid gold.

Then there was a rush of feet, a splash, a jabbering reply in angry tones, and then a burst of laughter, in the midst of which I could see a Chinese sailor gesticulating fiercely, as he wrung the water with which he was dripping from his blue cotton trousers and shirt.

"What are you grinning at, you lubber?" exclaimed another sailor.

And at the same moment a Malay, who had been the moment before displaying his white teeth at John Chinaman's expense, leaped two or three feet up in the air, as if touched by electricity, for a bucket of cold sea water was dashed upon him.

Then, with a bound, he was beneath the bulwarks, and crouching as if for a spring.

"Do 'em good, sir, the dirty warmen," said a sailor, addressing me. "They won't never wash their dirty hides; so we give 'em a dowse when we're doing the deck. Mind your shoes, sir."

It was my turn to make a leap, for another bucket of water was dashed along the deck, evidently partly aimed at my legs; but I only laughed, and slipped nimbly out of the way, for I knew that sailors were not scrupulous about splashing a little at deck-swalling times. So, perching myself out of harm's way, I sat enjoying the bright morning, while the customary holystoning and whitening the deck went on.

"Why don't you get out of the way, Teapot?" growled a low voice behind me, just as I was forgetting all present in a reminiscence of the past fortnight, when, turning round, I saw one of the sailors—a huge Goliath of a fellow—drawing the Chinaman backwards by his pigtail, just in time to save him from another douche aimed at him by one of the men.

But though saved from the water, the Chinaman seemed to resent the sacrilegious hand laid upon his tail most fiercely, and seizing his knife, he made as though to dart at the great sailor.

Tom Harrison's Adventure.

TOM HARRISON walks in his sleep; he is ashamed of it, but he can't help it—he was born so!

Last week Tom changed boarding-places, securing a nice set of rooms at the Oliver House. Thinking that perhaps as the bed, room, and furniture were all new and strange to him, he might indulge in his propensity for nocturnal perambulations, he called to his room, just before retiring, the coloured porter who plays with the trunks and bounces impecunious lodgers.

To this individual, who stands just seven feet high in his stockings, he explained the whole matter, and, handing him a dollar bill, said—

"Now, Charley, you just keep an eye on my room during the night, and in case you hear me moving about inside, come in, shake me a little, I'll awake, and then everything will be all right."

The porter said he understood, and departed.

Tom undressed, turned out the gas, threw open his window, and jumped into bed, and was soon sound asleep.

Patiently the darkey waited in the hall outside of door No. —. But not a sound was heard.

About 12.30 o'clock the air, blowing in through the open window in Tom's room, became so uncomfortable that Tom awoke, shivering like a wet mouse. Seeing the cause of the difficulty, he sprang out of bed to close the window, and in doing so tumbled over a chair.

That was just what Mr. Charley had been waiting for.

With one bound he was in the room, and seeing a form outlined against the window, he made a dash for it, and caught it with a grip of iron. Tom yelled with pain, and told Charley he was awake, that it

was all right, that he was not walking in his sleep; but Charley wouldn't have it in that way. He tripped up the unfortunate somnambulist, and threw him on the floor with a thump that rattled every bone in his body. Then he sat down on him, and began shaking him, by thumping his head up and down on the floor.

In vain Tom insisted that he was not asleep—the darkey kept right on. Every time Tom made an attempt to get up, the porter put his knee on his chest and pinned him to the floor, all the time keeping up his shaking process.

At length, all tired out, Tom remained perfectly still, and the porter, supposing by this time that he was quietly slumbering after his attack, placed him on the bed and retired.

The next morning that coloured porter came to Tom and asked him for another dollar, on account of the trouble he had in getting him out of his fit.

Mark Twain's Play.

ON the recent production at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, of "Ah Sin, the Heathen Chinee," the joint production of Bret Harte and Mark Twain, the latter gentleman, upon being called before the curtain, made the following amusing speech:—

"This," said he, "is a very remarkable play. I don't know as you noticed it as it went along, but it is. The construction of this play and the development of the story are the result of great research, and erudition, and genius, and invention—and plagiarism. When the authors wrote it, they thought they would put in a great lot of catastrophes and murders, and such things, because they always enliven an evening so; but we wanted to have some disaster that wasn't hackneyed, and after a good deal of thought we hit upon the breaking down of a stage-coach. The worst of getting a good original idea like that is the temptation to overdo it; and, in fact, when the play was all done we found that we had got that stage-coach breaking down seven times in the first act. It was to come right along here every seven minutes or so, and spill all the passengers over on the musicians. Well, you see, that wouldn't do; it made it monotonous for the musicians, and it was too stagey; and we had to modify it; and there isn't anything left of the original plan now except one break-down of the coach, and one carriage break-down, and one pair of runaway horses. Maybe we might have spared even some of these; but you see we had the horses, and we didn't like to waste them. I wish to say, also, that this play is didactic rather than anything else. It is intended rather for instruction than amusement. The Chinaman is getting to be a pretty frequent figure in the United States, and is going to be a great political problem; and we thought it well for you to see him on the stage before you had to deal with that problem. Then, for the instruction of the young, we have introduced a game of poker. There are few things that are so unpardonably neglected in our country as poker. The upper class know very little about it. Now and then you find ambassadors who have a sort of general knowledge of the game, but the ignorance of the people at large is fearful.

Why, I have known clergymen, good men, kind-hearted, liberal, sincere, and all that, who did not know the meaning of a 'flush.' It is enough to make one ashamed of one's species. When our play was finished, we found it was so long, and so broad, and so deep—in places—that it would have taken a week to play it. I thought that was all right; we could put 'To be continued' on the curtain, and run it straight along. But the manager said 'No'; it would get us into trouble with the general public, and into trouble with the general Government, because the Constitution forbids the infliction of cruel or unusual punishment. So he cut out, and cut out, and the more he cut out the better the play got. I never saw a play that was so much improved by being cut down; and I believe it would have been one of the very best plays in the world if his strength had held out so that he could cut out the whole of it."

Deaf as a Post.

MR. RAFFERTY is a little man, but he keeps a good barber's shop, and enters as heartily and as enthusiastically into the profession as an artist does into art.

Yesterday morning a stranger dropped into Rafferty's shop just as the chair at which Mr. Rafferty presided was being vacated. The stranger being "next," Mr. Rafferty indicated the same to him by a flourish, and he immediately occupied the chair.

"I want a shave," he explained.

He was a large man, with a tallowy face, lustreless eyes, and straggling hair.

The shave proceeded, and was finished. When the customer righted himself up for the hair-dressing, Mr. Rafferty ran the fingers of both hands through his hair, and, leaning over so as to bring the full weight of a remarkably winning smile upon the observation of the customer, said—

"Hair trimmed a little, sir?"

"What's that?" inquired the tallow-faced man.

"Have your hair trimmed a little, sir?" repeated Mr. Rafferty, with new strength in the winning smile.

"I don't hear you," said the customer, in a severe voice, which rumbled through the room like an earthquake.

Mr. Rafferty grew warm in the face. Other customers were coming in rapidly, and the chairs were full. But he lifted his voice, and still held on to the smile, although the strain on his vocal organs somewhat impaired its symmetry.

"Will you have your hair cut, sir?"

The stranger shook his head.

"I can't make out what you say," he said.

Mr. Rafferty was very red in the face now; he cast a helpless glance around upon the other customers, and was somewhat abashed to note their half-amused, half-expectant glances.

Gladly, as was evident from his expression, would he have dropped the subject right there; but it was impossible. The customer was twisting his head about to catch the words. Mr. Rafferty, with his face like a coal of fire, put his lips very close to the man's ear, and shrieked, with desolating force—

"Will you have your hair cut?"

"No!" vociferated the customer.

Mr. Rafferty heaved a sigh of relief, and went to work with renewed vigour at the work of preparing the hair for dressing. Gradually the heat went out of his face, and his composed expression returned. Suddenly leaning over, and bringing the winning smile to bear again, he said—

"Shampoo?"

The instant the word left his tongue, he saw the mistake, but it was too late to remedy it.

"What's that?" cried the customer.

There was a titter around the room. Mr. Rafferty's face was on fire.

"Will you have a shampoo?" he bawled.

"No, I won't," roared the customer.

Mr. Rafferty was conscious that the titter was increasing in volume; his hands trembled so that he could scarcely handle the pomade. It was not a most agreeable look he cast upon the skull before him; it was evident that our polite barber was in a dreadfully unnatural position. He rubbed away for a moment, and thus rubbing must have rubbed his confusion into the scalp of his adversary, for he suddenly bent forward, and anxiously inquired—

"Hair-dye?"

"What's that?" queried the customer.

"Great Heaven!" gasped the unhappy Mr. Rafferty, as it suddenly flashed over him what he had done.

"What's that you say?" asked the customer, in a voice of elevated peevishness.

Mr. Rafferty—who had flown to the back of the customer's head immediately on perceiving his dreadful mistake, and stood there trembling in the hope that he had not been detected—felt the fire come back into his face with devastating fury, while another titter, more emphatic than before, agitated the room. Casting a furtive look at the door, as if he seriously contemplated bolting through it, he opened his lips as if to speak, but no sound escaped them.

"Come, now, what's that you say?" came the hoarse voice of the tallowy-faced man.

The titter broke into a giggle. Mr. Rafferty, with the flame running up into his hair, desperately yelled—

"Do you want any hair-dye?"

"What?" thundered the customer.

Mr. Rafferty gasped for breath.

"Do you want any hair-dye?" he screamed.

"What's that?" shouted the customer, turning completely around, to the entire disarrangement of the towels, and with a face expressive of supreme disgust.

Mr. Rafferty's eyes stood right out from his head, and his hair stood right up from it, as he gathered himself together for one mighty effort, and yelled out, at the very apex of his voice—

"Do you want any hair-dye?"

"No, I don't," sullenly retorted the stranger; while the giggle broke into a derisive laugh.

Mr. Rafferty's face grew as white as the snow outside. He finished the balance of the performance without uttering a word, while an occasional half-suppressed laugh in the room would start him as if

it had been a pin thrust into the most sensitive part of his body.

The hair dressed, the pomatum applied, and the last touches given, the customer rose to his feet. Mr. Rafferty passed him the change, and mechanically observed—

"Do you wish to buy——"

Then suddenly checking himself, with a gasp of horror, he rushed to the basins, threw his head under the tap, and turned on the full power of the stream, while a perfect shout of laughter went up from the assembled customers.

Were we guilty of punning, we might speak of Mr. Rafferty's case as being an instance of the "Ruling passion strong in deaf."

Fishes and their Feelings.

THE anatomy of a fish, says the *Fishing Gazette*, shows that the nerves of smell are comparatively large; but several naturalists of mark argue that from the structure of the nostril and the want of an aerial medium, fish cannot smell at all, and that the nostrils perform a function similar to taste.

Stoddart says of trout that through their power of smell they "discern their food at a singular distance, and will track it, like the sleuth, for many yards." So says an eminent French naturalist.

Mr. Ronald made many experiments from his observatory to test the taste of trout, but confesses that the subject is one of great difficulty. He used to blow them various kinds of food through tubes, and the fact that they took dead house flies when plastered with cayenne and mustard seems, more than any other, to have led him to conclude that "if the animal had taste, his palate was not peculiarly sensitive."

Sir Humphrey Davy, in his "*Salmonia*," says:—

"The principal use of the nostrils in fishes, I believe, is to assist in the propulsion of water through the gills, for performing the office of respiration; but I think there are some nerves in these organs which give a sense of the qualities of water, or of substance dissolved in or diffused through it, similar to our sense of smell, or perhaps, rather, our sense of taste; for there can be no doubt that fishes are attracted by scented worms, which are sometimes used by anglers that employ ground baits."

Probably the organ of taste in fish, if taste they have, does not reside in the mouth. However, that they have some considerable faculties of taste or smell, or of both combined, is pretty evident from the fact that they are attracted by chemically flavoured pastes and oils.

Our forefathers, angling and naturalist, doubtless talked a great deal of nonsense on this point; but the main fact cannot be denied. Trout are drawn long distances by salmon roe prepared in a certain manner. The fact that trout and perch will sometimes take an artificial worm—made, say, of india-rubber—may be used as an argument on both sides of this question; for, on the one hand, it may be argued that they have little taste or smell, to take such a thing into their mouths; while, on the other, the fact may be adduced that they immediately eject, or try to eject, the treacherous bait thus taken.

Beware of Poker.

POKER has lately become a very productive method of fleecing unsuspecting players, says a New York paper, and when played in gambling houses is almost as certain as *faro* itself.

The various methods of stacking cards and dealing from the bottom of the pack, are too easily detected by even green players, to be generally relied on. "The boy in the bush," as it is called, is much more killing, because it is undiscoverable.

In "skin" poker-rooms, a hole is bored in the ceiling, back or above where the victim is to sit. Facing him is the player who is to fleece him. There is a wire under the gambler's foot, which runs under the floor and up the wall, and ends near the aforesaid hole. A confederate keeps his eye to the hole, and signals how many pairs the victim holds. Of course the sharper is practically looking into his victim's hand, and makes short work of him.

It is related of an old gentleman who had a weakness for poker, that he always carried an umbrella with him to the gambling-house. If he suspected that there was a "boy in the bush," he raised his umbrella, quietly remarking—

"There's a terrible lot of dust falling down from that ceiling."

The gamblers simply quit playing with him, for advantage players seldom count for much when deprived of their helps.

Another system of robbery at poker much in vogue now is the "secret helper." This is a plate having a mouth like a brace fare box. The inside vest pocket is made double, to hold the "helper," which has a strong string attached to it, running down the inside of the right leg of the operator's trousers, and fastens around his boot in a loop. The operator holds his cards close to his breast, and when he wants the helper to take a card out of his hand, he presses gently with his foot, the mouth of the "helper" is opened, and a piece of machinery like a pair of nippers darts out, seizes the card offered, and hides it in its chamber. The card remains in the "helper" until it can be used to fill a full hand of four of a kind, the spring is pressed again, and the card comes out into the player's hand, and the nippers go down again with the discarded card.

This "helper" has made the fortunes of many poker players in the clubs of New York.

THE late Mrs. Jane W—— was equally remarkable for kindness of heart and absence of mind. One day she was accosted by a beggar, whose stout and healthy appearance startled her into a momentary doubt of the needfulness of charity in this instance. "Why," exclaimed the good old lady, "you look well able to work." "Yes," replied the supplicant, "but I have been deaf and dumb these seven years." "Poor man, what a heavy affliction!" exclaimed Mrs. W——, at the same time giving him relief with a liberal hand. On returning home, she mentioned the fact, remarking, "What a dreadful thing it is to be deprived of such precious faculties!" "But how," asked her sister, "did you know that the poor man had been deaf and dumb for seven years?" "Why," was the quiet and unconscious answer, "he told me so!"

The Egotist's Note-book.

A PROPOS of the war and the telegrams of the taking of this place and that place—the terrible defeat here, and the slaughter there, with only the loss of two, three, or half a dozen men—one is bound to come to the conclusion that the Turks can fib as strongly as our old historians did about our losses at Agincourt and Crecy in days gone by.

Mr. Spurgeon said the other day, at a meeting, that he had written a book giving sketches of preachers he had seen, and he hoped all young men who engaged in this work would read it. Some preached in a prize-fighting style, as threatening with their fists, while they said "Come unto me." Then others used the pump-handle style. Some time since he had seen a man preaching at a street corner, having with him a Bible big enough to need a wheelbarrow to carry it, and he was preaching the gospel to a little dog—his sole auditor. Let them, in preaching in the streets, be natural and earnest, and let them avoid oddities; for there was no small danger of the oddity of the preacher being remembered, while his teaching was forgotten. "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us, to see oursel's as ithers see us!" Do not these remarks made by the great Tabernaculist apply exceedingly strongly to a certain preacher named Spurgeon?

M. Paul de Cassagnac has had the good taste to say that he danced upon the coffin of the late great statesman, Thiers. This was metaphorical, of course. What a pity for France that he did not do so literally, till the lid let him in, so that he could not get out. France could manage to live without Paul de Cassagnac.

Here is a New York gentleman's account of his battle with the Colorado beetle:—"It would amuse you to know how I have battled all through this summer with the potato bug, in order to retain my crop. First, as soon as the plant showed itself, I turned over the leaves, and with a pebble crushed the eggs. This I did for a week, till I thought, 'You are disposed of.' In a few days I go triumphantly into my potato patch, like a conqueror, when, to my amazement, I find myriads, from the size of a pin's head to a bean. 'No, you sha'n't,' I say, and forthwith we all get together, and slay and spare not. 'Now I've conquered,' thought I. In a day or two I go to reconnoitre, and for every one slain one hundred or one hundred thousand had come; so I proclaimed war to the knife, and every day I went with a vessel of water, and shook them off into it. Meanwhile the plant was rapidly being devoured. At last I had succeeded in getting the plant out of danger, and the potato was well-formed; still I did not relax until this was a well-assured fact, and the haulm began to wither, when I thought they could be left to take care of themselves. The insects were game, for after a week's furlough I went to look at the result, and it was simply millions, and there they remained, till I found vast quantities had perished for want of nourishment; but now they infest every

place in the city and in the country, or the road and the sidewalk, and wherever you go you see the familiar beast. It is a loathsome insect; no animal or bird will devour it, and even the toad will rather leave it alone. I might have saved some trouble by using Paris green, but this I object to."

To take a case:—If John Smith had twelve big sons, and lived on a farm adjoining that of William Jones, who had also twelve big sons somewhere down in Essex or Hertfordshire, and a quarrel arising, the Smiths and Joneses armed themselves with scythes and pitchforks, and went on fighting and killing one another, what should we say of the neighbours who did not interfere and stop the slaughter? I think we should call them cowardly scoundrels. To drop metaphor, here are Russia's and Turkey's finest men being butchered with all the appliances of modern warfare, and England, Prussia, and Austria look calmly on, when their interference could stop this hideous effusion of blood. If the world lasts another thousand years in its present state, but with civilization progressing, surely the peoples of A.D. 2877 will speak with horror of the savage barbarians who inhabited Europe in 1877—the present year of grace.

We have heard enough of torpedoes lately, and with a shudder at the diabolical implements. At last one is to be put to a purpose worthy of praise—namely, to blow up a dangerous wreck lying in the course of Channel-going ships. So it was, and—failed.

The Turks think that Hobart Pasha is "a man of wax." So do Madame Tussaud and Sons, for they have added him to their collection.

The Prince of Wales has gone down to Yorkshire on a sporting trip, his host being Sir George Wombwell. The shooting on the estate is said to be excellent, abounding as it does in wild creatures as food for powder and shot. But people must not make any mistake: this is not Wombwell's menagerie, and the wild creatures are only birds.

The use of the knife has become so prevalent lately, as exemplified by the terrible stabbing cases mentioned in our papers, that a philanthropist has been suggesting that all the knives supplied to rough-looking characters shall be made so that they will not open, or else without a blade.

The sounding Brass at the Haymarket Theatre has not been succeeded by the tinkling cymbal, but by the great gong—in other words, Mr. J. S. Clarke, whose sound always fills the house.

The behaviour of the Turks at Plevna seems to be the most redoubtable of anything in the war. So much for earthworks.

The *Echo* has been firing a good straightforward blow at the music halls. It says the main object is "to sell as much drink as possible at high prices, and, alike from a physical and a moral point of view, a place of amusement conducted on such a principle must have a pernicious influence, especially among young men, who are its chief patrons. Three part

of the evening's entertainment were utterly contemptible—stupidity, vulgarity, and pugnacity being mixed in about equal parts, and spiced with suggestive *doubles entendres*, the intent of which was readily caught up by the auditory. . . . And this is the kind of place that is licensed by the magistrates year after year. It may appear quite right and proper to them, but if I found one of my boys graduating in such a school of the devil, I should feel that I had a serious grievance not only against the proprietors, but against the magistrates who created the monopoly."

A very good story, said not to have been published as yet, is told of Thackeray. It appears that the great novelist was at loggerheads with a Mr. Reach, a gentleman who was exceedingly touchy about the pronunciation of his name—Re-ack, and not, as we should consider it, like the stretching forth of the hand. To the great disgust of Thackeray, he found himself out at dinner one evening with his epistolary adversary; and in the course of the meal the novelist had to ask his opponent to partake of a dish—

"Mr. Reach, shall I send you some mutton?"

"Mr. Thackeray," said the other, "I must request, sir, that you will not call me out of my name. It is Re-ack, sir—Reack."

"I beg pardon," said Thackeray.

And for the time being the matter dropped; but it was the general opinion at the table that Thackeray would not let the matter go unnoticed.

Thackeray's opportunity came with the dessert, when a dish of fruit being placed before him, he again addressed Mr. Reach, with—

"Mr. Re-ack, shall I send you a pe-ack?"

THERE is an expression in the face of a good married man who has a good wife, that a bachelor's cannot have. It is indescribable. He is a little nearer the angels than the prettiest young fellow living. You can see that his broad breast is a pillow for somebody's head, and that little fingers pull his whiskers. No one ever mistakes the good married man. It is only the erratic one who leaves you in doubt. The good one can protect all the unprotected females, and make himself generally agreeable to the ladies, and yet never leave a doubt on any mind that there is a precious little woman at home worth all the world to him.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER IX.—A DAY'S IDLENESS.

SAMPSON ELTON certainly bore off the palm for industry upon the match day, for all Waveley was out; while as to work, it was looked upon as an utter impossibility. Even the National School children had obtained a holiday—perhaps a good deal due to the fact that Mr. Timothy Boreham, the master, was to score upon the Waveley side. There the young dogs stood in a knot—rather a tangled knot—close by the white canvas tent, and ready to cheer everything and everybody who came upon the ground. It seemed to them that everything would bear a cheer; and they had begun with one for the fruitseller's donkey, keeping up the charter till the Union Jack was hoisted above the tent, when they cheered louder than ever.

Cricket matches mostly happen upon wet days, but this was an exception; for when the loaded 'bus arrived with the enemy from Edgeton, the sun shone perhaps a little too brightly, while the emerald turf—mown, rolled, and elastic as springy moss could make it—was sprinkled over with visitors, constantly increasing in numbers, from a circle some miles in extent; for though the village club bore the name of Waveley, yet many of its constituents came from a considerable distance. There was young Dilworth from Copse Hall; the two Estcourts from Daley Vicarage; Tom Todd, the Dubbleby saddler; and men from Chinkton, Belledale, and Smokeley. It was an eleven whose prowess was known throughout the country; and an important match generally brought down Tom Phipps, who looked upon cricket as the *summum bonum* of life.

But the Edgeton men knew what Waveley could do, and had accordingly made their arrangements, as shown when the Waveley schoolboys cheered, and the 'bus came careering over the green with a load of their best, to struggle for the laurels ere now lost.

The schoolboys cheered as the 'bus drew up, with a flag tied behind the driver; and then the Waveley men took up the cheering by way of welcoming their adversaries, who loudly responded from inside and outside the 'bus, where they were tightly packed—players and scorers, umpire, friends, and all; and then the cheering continued until the 'bus was unloaded—setting down men in every conceivable costume, and then taking its departure for the Red Lion-yard.

This cricket is a wonderful game, and seems to require wonderful dresses. If the men of Marylebone are to be thanked for setting the example, they have much to answer for. Touching the Edgeton men and their heads, they were got up in every variety of gorgeous flannel cap—pink, pale-blue, scarlet, crimson, green, yellow, striped, spotted, splashed, piebald, and skewbald. Then as to their bodies, there were shirts of every rainbow tint, and this alone gave the party as they stood upon the green sward the appearance of an ill-planted bed of common tulips. Then, too, their legs: the Edgeton men delighted in calling their club the "Knickerbockers," and therefore their appearance can be

better imagined than described, when it is said they carried the name of their club in their continuations.

"Between eleven gentlemen of the Waveley Union, and eleven gentlemen of the Edgeton Knickerbockers," so spoke the green bill. And then at last the game began, after the usual amount of throwing, catching, attitudinising, and figuring about, while as to the mode of play, the most careful inspection only showed that cricket was played at Waveley in precisely the same fashion as in other parts of the United Kingdom, and therefore a long description of a game which presented no remarkable salient points would be tedious. Let it suffice that the Edgeton men went in first, and that wicket-keeping Tom Phipps was here, there, and everywhere, the very embodiment of india-rubber antics.

Then came the lunch in the tent—"spread in his accustomed way by Host Hopcraft, of the Red Lion"—and then for a time friend and foe ate, drank, and were merry. The bottled beer corks flew; there were aqueous cucumbers, and cool, crimply salads, with pungent vinegar or bland salad cream; cold ham, cold tongue, cold lamb, cold chine, cold round of beef, cold fowls, cold custards, cold tarts—everything cold but the eaters, who were furiously hot. The sun had been pouring down his beams with corn-ripening fury, and the fielders had had their work to do. Several of the principal people of the neighbourhood joined the luncheon, for cricket was in capital odour. The Squire looked in for a while, and the Rector with him—not to lunch, however, but to see others enjoy themselves; while Mr. Deedes, the lawyer, and Mr. Childe, the doctor, thought it not *infra dig.* to quaff bottled beer with the men of the bat.

But before long the players were reminded of the assembled company waiting to witness their prowess, and the Waveley men now began their innings, with Frank Henderson and Tom Phipps batting; but the latter, during one of his elastic skips, managed to knock off a bail, and had to retire, but not without leaving the figure of 9 placed against his name by the scorer. Then came Stephen Vaughan, when, as if in emulation, for quite an hour, Frank and he set the Edgeton men hard to work, chasing the ball into all parts of the field; in the scorer's tent; now into the marquee; under a barouche; amongst the ladies; while one of Stephen Vaughan's hits sent the ball so far, that on alighting it gave a hop, and went right out of the field.

But the best innings must have an end, and both our friends had to succumb at last, but retired amidst a perfect ovation of clapping. The sun shone his hottest; but it seemed to have no visible effect upon the players, who only toiled the harder. The only people visibly affected by the heat were the lookers-on, who kept moving about as the ray-crowned monarch swept majestically on, peering with inquiring gaze beneath parasols, and into places where but a short time before the shade had it all its own way. For uncommonly fond of a pretty face and a clear skin is the sun; almost as bad in that respect as Jupiter of old, only he is more open and straightforward. There are no animal habits and metamorphoses. Where the sun kisses, he kisses boldly, and, moreover, leaves his mark burn-

ing for hours. Who so fond of playing with glossy tresses?—hiding amongst them, toying with them, and darting in and out from amidst the perfumed maze; oft and oft dwelling there until old Time, with his sour aspect and wintry ways, drives him out to dwell there instead—silvering with frosty rime the locks which fast grow thin. And the sun was as bad as ever upon the Waveley match day, for Madeline Glebeley and Alice Vaughan were full of complaints. Like many more, they had strolled down to the field to watch the progress of the match, and wanted to appear very much pleased and delighted with all the proceedings. They both thought it very agreeable when Frank and Stephen were winning the plaudits of all around, though for what they were applauded did not seem to them clear, unless it was for running backwards and forwards a great many times, and making themselves very hot.

But in truth the ladies were decidedly not delighted with the match; they wanted protection, and to be taken down amongst the leafy groves and by the rippling river, far away from the rudeness of Phœbus. And at last Alice pettishly exclaimed—

"What enjoyment there can be in running after that stupid ball I can't see. Do come away, dear. It's so hot and tiresome; and now the gentlemen we know have done playing, the interest, if there ever was any, seems quite gone. Do let us go!"

"No, don't," said a plaintive voice at her elbow; and starting and looking round, there stood Tom Phipps at her side, smoking a cigar. "No, don't," said Tom; "we are just coming to repose upon our laurels."

"Laurels," said Alice; "why, I always thought that those nasty cigars were made of cabbage leaves."

"Oh, nonsense! You know what I mean, only I am such an unlucky little fellow," said Tom. "I always make a muddle of things. Nice game, though, isn't it?"

"Nice game?" said Alice. "I haven't patience with any one for being so absurd as to—"

"Dress himself in Dutch knickerbockers, eh?" said Frank, joining the party with Stephen.

"What do you think of our London friend, Miss Glebeley? Is he not the very *beau ideal* of a cricketer?"

"Or a muff!" suggested Stephen, laughing.

"Fie! Steve," said Alice, tartly.

"Oh, don't interfere, Miss Vaughan—pray don't," said Tom, in a lachrymose tone. "Your dear brother is quite right—the great are always just. But he made use of an obsolete term—'Muff.' He should have said 'Duffer,' as being more polite and in accordance with present day observances. Pray let him continue his castigation. You see he strikes at me, but it is only in the process of sharpening his own blunt faculty against the whetstone of my logic. Don't you think he improves, Frank?"

"In what?" said Frank.

"In what? Why, in mental ability. A fine fellow, you see; but he is too big. There's the marble for a noble statue, but the corners want knocking off. He requires fining down; and there will be plenty left then."

"Those who live in glass houses—" said Frank.

"Oh, bother!" cried Tom. "But I say, ladies, don't go. The match will be decided in the first innings, and there's all the fun of the day to come—no end of wickets to go down."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Alice, "how can you think that we care anything for wickets, and balls, and stumps, and such nonsense? Stephen is for ever talking of the rubbish, when his mouth is not full of horses and dogs. I'm tired of it—aren't you, Madeline? Do let us go!"

But Madeline was listening to some explanations that were being given by Frank, and was evidently in no hurry to leave the ground; while Stephen had planted himself beneath an oak, and was smoking furiously, perhaps because he had no companion. And then somehow or another a conversation sprang up between Alice and the little gentleman in blue knickerbockers—a conversation which lasted some considerable time, and would have lasted longer, but for the interruption of Madeline, who, strolling up to where they stood, said, playfully—

"How much longer am I to wait for you, Ally?"

Alice bit her lip, and the colour flushed to her cheek, but only to leave it again slightly pale; but she recovered herself directly, laughed, made a threatening gesture at her companions with her parasol, and then they strolled towards the gate; while, as Tom's prophecy proved to be no better than those of "Tao Tse," the gentlemen had to wait and take part again, to oppose the Edgeton second innings. As Frank stood gazing after those who had but a minute before left them, he suddenly started, and turned to where Stephen was watching him with so bitterly intense a look that for a few minutes the young men faced each other angrily, when the voice of Tom Phipps broke the spell, and they went and played until the evening came on, when the stumps were removed, leaving the game in that most unsatisfactory of states—drawn.

CHAPTER X.—THE SORROWS OF GRAVES.

TOM'S leave of absence was expiring, and Bill Graves brought round the dog-cart; *adieux* were said, when passing rather a pungent remark upon the man's head of hair—a remark which quite spoilt the flavour of the bestowed sixpence—the horse was whipped-up, and Tom Phipps gone, leaving Bill Graves standing with his brow knit, and looking, to say the least of it, rather cut.

Bill Graves was the "ne'er-do-weel" of the village; but when he liked there was always a job for him up at the Hall. At the present time he had just come out of Ramsford Gaol, and on reaching the cottage rented of Sampson Elton, he found his wife waiting to welcome him home, with a thumping great seven weeks' baby for him to keep. The cottage looked clean and tidy, and the table was covered with needlework, which tidiness rather surprised Bill, and he stood scratching his head with one hand, not in the least disarranging his hair by so doing, for the county barber had taken it off rather close.

The act of scratching his head seemed to bring no elucidation of the mystery—the aspect of comfort where he had looked for misery—so he tried

rubbing his hollow cheek with the other hand. At the very least, when he came out, he expected to have found the cottage occupied by another tenant, and his wife in the union. As to the baby, that was a little event he was prepared for—that is, as to seeing it, but not as to the calls it would make on his exchequer. For Bill's exchequer was very low, as might well be expected. He was the "ne'er-doweel" not from idleness or true vagabondism, but his lot had been cast in the village of Waveley, which happened to be surrounded by estates where game was strictly preserved, and where it consequently abounded. If there had been neither partridge, pheasant, nor hare in the neighbourhood, I have no hesitation in saying that Bill Graves would have been an honest man; but, as there were all these temptations in the way, Bill was not honest, that is, as far as the Game Laws were concerned, for there he was constantly giving way to his special weakness. He must have been possessed by a game devil; for it was of no use to fine or imprison him. Every magistrate upon the Edgeton Bench had given him warnings and reprimands, till Bill, with tears in his eyes, declared that he would never set another snare or take another "fezzan" as long as he lived. But it was of no use; before a month was over he would be at it again, be caught, and at last be favoured with a taste of that prescription for the cure of poaching to be found in the Justices' Manual, to wit—three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Hard labour he was used to, for he was a good workman at farm duties; but no sooner had he obtained an engagement, and all was going on swimmingly, than some impish hare would tempt him by showing him where she was in the habit of going to feed, when he could not help setting a wire for her, and of course the keepers would find it—watch it—and then poor Bill Graves would again be introduced to his friends upon the Edgeton Bench.

When Bill, who was a fine, stalwart, good-humoured-looking fellow—when Bill had the audacity to fall in love, and marry Jim Wood's sister—Jim Wood being one of Sampson Elton's men, a dark, slow-speaking fellow, who rejoiced in the *sobriquet* of Solid Mahogany—when Bill married Jim Wood's sister, he spat in his hands fiercely, and took hold of the plough handles with the determination of giving up "porching;" and capitably he kept to his determination. But Bill was but mortal, like the hares; and one day, in going to his work, he espied pussy snared in the hedge by the roadside, and dead, as if killed a week since.

Bill stopped and looked at the hare. It was "a fine 'un." Bill thought he should like to have it. Next day Sunday, too. Only to think, roasted, with a pudding inside, after a month's bacon. It was an awful temptation, and the tempted one turned all over in a perspiration with the struggle which was going on within him. He thought of his wife—of Ramsford Gaol—of the magistrates, and of his determination to get into no more scrapes; and then he walked on about a dozen yards.

"Dal it all," said Bill, "I should like to have it;" and then he looked back at the hare, which lay with one eye open, and showing its teeth, as if

laughing at him. "Dal it all, I should like to have it," said Bill again. "Can't be no harm, as I didn't set the snare. Be stopping other chaps from porching, if they don't get no luck."

All this while the hare was fascinating Bill with that one open eye, and drawing him back to the spot he had left a minute before.

Bill looked to the left, then to the right, then up and down, and behind each hedge.

Nobody!

"Lord, how hot it is!" said Bill, wiping his face with his sleeve, and then hesitating again.

He took another survey of the place.

Nobody!

"Wonder who set that snare?" he said, in a husky voice. "Dal it all, I can't help it!" he exclaimed, at last. "I wouldn't touch it if it warn't for my lass for to-morrow's dinner."

And then he jumped across the ditch, dragged poor pussy out of her wire necklace, ran about a dozen yards towards a bed of stinging nettles, and then stooped down to conceal his prize.

But the hare hid itself—for poor Bill dropped it, and down it went to the bottom of the ditch, and out of sight; for out of the midst of the tall venomous stems appeared the upper half of one of Bill's direst enemies, dressed in a dark green velvet shooting-jacket.

"Hullo, my lad," said Mr. Thomas Sporrige, with a pleasant grin upon his countenance.

"Hullo," said Billy, sulkily.

"Saturday week, my boy," said velvetene, stooping and picking up the hare, and then bearing it off without another word; while poor Bill went moodily to his work.

When he reached home that night a summons awaited him, and on Saturday week he had the pleasure of meeting the keeper before the magistrates; and a very good case the keeper made out against poor Bill, who in vain protested that he did not set the snare. For Bill's character hung millstone-like about his neck, and the desperate poacher was sent off, to be under the care of Governor Gattward, at Ramsford Gaol, for three months.

But now Bill was out once more, and had hugged his wife to his heart's content, vowing again and again that he would never more touch hare or pheasant—no, not even if they asked him, which was not very likely to happen.

"But how well thee looks, lass," said Bill; "and how hast ta kep house and home-together? How did thee get on with old Elton 'bout the rent?"

Mrs. Graves told how she had been pressed and threatened by the landlord, and how at last she had appealed to the young master, who had helped her in her difficulty.

Bill Graves's countenance did not bode much good for friend Sampson as he listened to his wife's recital; but the latter part acted as an emollient, and he smiled with pleasure again.

"What!" he exclaimed, "paid the whole two pounds? The whole of it? God bless him!"

Bill Graves was a great, ignorant man; but he must have been a big fool into the bargain, or he never would have laid his great, rough, stupid-looking head upon his wife's shoulder, his arm round

her neck, and done what hard usage and imprisonment had never drawn from him—sobbed and cried like a great boy; and all because an act of kindness had been done for his wife. But so it was; and possibly prison fare may have had something to do with the matter.

"God bless him!" exclaimed Bill Graves, rubbing his eyes. "If ever I can do him a good turn, I will. See, lass, how weak I've got. It's prison fare does it. And so Squire's wife gave thee all the needlework to do, and there's work up there for me, is there? Lord! and I've taken scores of rab-buds and fezzans off Squire's ground afore now; but no more of that, lass, if I knows on it. No, nor nobody else sha'n't touch 'em, if I knows it. But if ever there's a hare on old Elton's land, dal me if I don't have it, and that, too, down to the last."

"Oh, Bill!" exclaimed his wife, "and what did you promise?"

"Dal it, lass, so I did. What a fool I be, sewer/y. Well, it is a fine un," continued Bill, as his wife proudly displayed the points of the little, or rather big, stranger that had made its appearance during its father's incarceration.

"And it is such a good one," says Mrs. Graves, "never hardly cries a bit, and——"

"Ware—ware—ware—ware!" went the little Graves.

"Say," said Bill, "what do you call that, then?"

"Only wants its dinner, a beauty!" said Mrs. Graves, supplying the needful meal upon the spot.

While Bill sat and looked on, as proud, and pleased, and happy as if he had been born in Bel-gravia, and were then sitting in a patrician mansion, he being a patrician himself.

"And so the young master did all that, did he? Two pounds!" said Bill, after a five minutes' pause. "God bless him! If ever I can do him a good turn, I will."

If poor Bill could have seen into the future, he would no doubt have felt disposed to rob—poach—anything to get himself sent out of the country, anywhere, so that he might not injure the man he now felt he would go through fire and water to serve.

After Tiger.

THE elephants that morning were unusually uneasy and fidgety, and had, no doubt, instinctive knowledge that they would soon be called upon to engage in other than their ordinary daily duty.

Elephants in some ways much resemble horses, and most particularly in this respect—that, as long as they have their wits about them, they can be trusted to display more than ordinary sagacity; but once they lose their heads or become flurried, then there is an end of all hope of making them behave otherwise than in the most idiotic manner.

As we jogged along, the jerky motion that the elephant lent to the howdah, which was passed on to me, its occupant, was anything but pleasant; however, in time usage made it less and less unbearable, until at length I rather liked it than otherwise.

Standing on the animal's back behind each howdah, and holding on to the same, was a shikari,

whose duty it was to keep a sharp look-out, and to apprise us the instant he spied game of any sort. The practised eye of these fellows astonished me considerably. Though always carefully on the alert myself, never once did I sight game without my shikari having done so, and pointed it out beforehand.

We, with thirteen elephants all told, were pushing our way through a very small field, which brought us rather too close to one another, when suddenly my shikari, in an excited manner, pointed straight to the elephant's front; but I, with straining eyes, could see nothing. Keenly alert for some sign of life, I was soon startled by a quick, rustling sound quite close, and next instant the crack, crack of two or three rifles was heard.

"We've killed a big tiger!" suddenly shouted one of our party, to which we laconically replied, "Oh, ah!"

But it was a fact. He had seen the beast standing in a path we were following, and shot him in the chest, F—— finishing him with a shell.

He was a beauty, not very long, but very muscular and thick-set—the picture of physical strength. Those who have seen a tiger's forearm after the skin has been taken off, revealing the blue muscle and sinew, have seen the perfection of physical organization.

Some two or three hours after this kill an event happened that provoked a considerable amount of merriment among the rest of the party, but which to me was anything but mirth-inspiring. One of our party had knocked over a deer, which, on being hit, cried most piteously. My elephant, on hearing the sounds, stopped suddenly, paused for a moment, then, turning sharp round, ran away as hard as he could go, at the same time brandishing his trunk and tail in the air, and bellowing with all his might, as if the bullet had hit him and not the deer.

As luck had it, there were very few trees about; if there had been many, the howdah and I would, in all probability, very soon have formed a mixed ruin on the ground. As it was, the howdah swayed in the most awkward and alarming manner, and seemed likely at any moment to jerk itself free from its fastenings.

Not particularly caring for the motion, and not knowing how far the joke might be extended, I shouted to the mahout to stop the brute, he all the time making frantic endeavours to do so by belabouring, in the most relentless manner, the skull of the terrified beast with an iron crook that he was wielding with both hands. It was all of no use; and not till he resorted to the cruel plan of digging the crook into the animal's flesh did he manage to pull him up.

We wended our way to a reedy swamp, distant some three miles. On the far side was a high bank, and then the forest began.

The reeds had been burnt to some extent, and the water had dried up, leaving the ground sticky rather than swampy, and into this we urged our unwilling elephants. After awhile a friend fired twice, and he called out to us that he had killed a tiger that had been sneaking slowly towards the wood.

On crossing and dismounting, we found that one shot had missed completely, and that the other had

gone through his back, passing near the heart. There were two or three old wounds, which the poor beast had licked, and thus healed; but one bullet had gone through the ball of the fore-paw, and had evidently caused exquisite pain. The tiger had been unable to forage for himself, and was evidently starving. His was a happy release.

We next beat a strip of country intersected by the dry bed of a mountain stream, where some years before a party, which included myself, had killed a fine tigress. The grass had been burnt, and there was no covert for large game. For some miles we followed the course of this ravine.

At some distance we saw the elephants being hurried by the mahouts in a particular direction, and on coming nearer we saw our friends firing repeatedly at a moving object in the grass. A leopard shortly after ran out, and lay down in the open, where it received the *coup de grâce*.

My elephant knocked up a beast that ran to my right, and I followed. It turned out to be a tiger cub, which I brought down, badly wounded, and which in this condition made ineffectual efforts to get up and bite the elephant. The mother had tried to sneak off ahead, leaving her cub to take care of itself. Madam tried to shelter herself behind the stump of a tree; but this protection proved inadequate, and she was polished off.

A nabob, in an unusual fit of candour, communicated to us that he knew a likely place for tigers, and we trudged off under his guidance. The day was very hot, not a breath of wind, and, owing to the many trees, one's umbrella was of little use. The sál trees are by no means umbrageous, and the sun beat down heavily. Our guide took us along the bed of a mountain torrent; there was no covert whatever, and we thought we were on a fool's errand.

I was sitting down and listening to the man behind me, who was explaining rather apologetically that these hill men had no consciences, when the mahout said, "*Sahib, bāgh bāgh!*" and pointed to the ravine in the direction of my right front.

There were some trees in the way, and, for the life of me, I could not see the beast. My elephant snuffed, and tapped his trunk against the ground, and rather looked to the rear; and these symptoms became aggravated when the tiger came out from under the trees, and made off some fifty yards ahead in the open, lumbering along in a bovine canter. I thought that the beast would go back to the shelter of the ravine; and, as stops are not supposed to fire without orders, I did not think it advisable to send a bullet after him; for, if I missed, he would never be seen again. However, he had no intention of stopping, and so I blazed at him, and missed.

Our shikaris next day came to camp with a wonderful story of how they had seen a tiger and tigress, who on their approach had leisurely retired to a swamp not a mile from the tents. Off we started to the other side of this swamp, with the pad elephants, to try and beat through in their direction. One elephant got stuck on her way across, and was in dire distress, the tears rolling down her cheeks. She had to go back and recross

lower down. It was a swamp, and no mistake! and might have harboured all the tigers in Nepal. We could make nothing of it.

Our elephants went in some fifty or sixty yards, but could get no farther; so we let off guns and fireworks, and set fire to the grass and bushes, in order to drive any game there might be towards the four howdah elephants. The jungle caught fire readily, and the crackling and smoke and flames did one's heart good. We ultimately drove out an immense bear. A little farther on I tried to press my way through the reeds, but it was impossible; they were ten and fifteen feet higher than my howdah, thick as one's finger.

It was not till afternoon that we got to the spot where the shikari had found in the sand the foot-prints of three or four tigers. There was plenty of shade, and water was not far off. The ravine broke into three portions, at the mouths of which we were posted. My elephant stood level with the ravine, rather to one side. We heard the monkeys chatter, and immediately knew for certain that tigers were afoot. Just then I caught sight of a tiger stalking along the edge of the high bank to my left, his back and tail being all I could see. On moving my elephant in his direction he mended his pace and went ahead. I followed for a short distance, but the better advice of the shikari recalled me to the others. He said, very truly, that we could try for this animal afterwards, with a better chance of success.

On turning, I heard "bang, bang," and found that they had come on two large tigers, and had fired at them right and left. The male got off, and the female was wounded, and killed when the others came up.

Meanwhile, others were hurrying off in another direction, firing at something in the grass. I made tracks also, and we came on a large cub, after a chase of a quarter of a mile. A lucky shot at thirty or forty yards dropped her. We hunted after the big tiger, but without success. How he could have eluded us is a mystery.

On this we formed up line and turned homeward, going in the direction my tiger had taken. The plateau was terminated by a river flowing at right angles, the grass on this plain being nowhere higher than a man's head. We were standing up, talking of our day's sport, the guns in their compartments, when an elephant between my neighbour and myself stopped dead and shied; there was a trepidation among the pads, and a fair-sized tiger (the one I had seen) ran across our front to the left, trying to get away. The tiger then came half in my direction, and I fired with my double smooth-bore, wounding him, it afterwards appeared, in the body. He then came at my elephant; my two barrels were discharged, and before I could take up a second gun he had come within ten feet of the elephant, crouched, and—stopped. Then he turned off towards our extreme left, and finding some one in the way, he made a desperate, hopeless charge right at my friend's elephant, and, as far as I can remember, he was in the air when he fired, hitting him in the head. His attitude was like that of a man taking a header.

On examination he was found to be a full-grown male.

During the night we had heard a tiger not far from the house, not growling, but uttering a kind of cry. They said this beast was always loafing about the premises, hankering after cart bullocks. The indefatigable shikari had seen footprints in the sand leading down to the river.

The grass was high and thick, and we beat for some distance, knowing that game were in front, but not their exact whereabouts. At length the line wavered, and he pronounced that a tigress had broken back.

We turned to the right-about. She was presently seen by the mahouts, and fired at; but she ran on before us, the moving grass indicating her position. Here we stopped, sent the elephants out of the grass, and after a long *détour* beat up from where we had started in the first instance. I remained as stop.

The monkeys chattered, and swung from tree to tree, so we knew that she had not gone far. Again the line missed her, and again they went back—this time with success. She was driven up to some twenty yards in front of my elephant, and as she put out her head and shoulder from behind some grass, I fired. At this instant she must have drawn back; for, although she growled, she was not hit. She then turned off to the right, towards the forest. We thereupon got an easy shot, and killed her with a bullet through the body.

We had some trouble in securing this, our last tiger.

A Dreadful Bureau.

LOVE is an incentive to extraordinary effort. When a man is in love he will do anything for the object of his passion, any claim her people may make upon him is honoured without hesitation. We have often heard the mother of only one child, and that a daughter, commiserated in her helplessness. But she is not necessarily helpless, unless the daughter is uglier than sin, and full as disagreeable. A little girl, of a sweet, loveable disposition, can keep at least three little boys fluttering in the light of her smiles, and while there is the faintest prospect of winning her, any one of them will work his knuckles off in her mother's service, and feel grateful for the opportunity.

Young Mr. Miggs is enchanted with a young lady in Munson-street. He was regaling himself on the luxury of her presence last Wednesday evening, when her mother came into the room. Immediately Mr. Miggs sprang up to help her to a chair.

"I was just wondering," she said, glancing pleasantly at her daughter, "if Mr. Miggs wouldn't help me to get that sitting room bureau in its place!"

"Why, ma—" protested the young lady.

"Certainly I will," hastily and enthusiastically asserted Mr. Miggs, his whole face shining with benevolent intent.

"It isn't heavy, only one can't manage it very well alone, you see," exclaimed the wily woman.

"I want it lifted so I can put the carpet under it.

It won't take but a minute, and if you can help me I'll be ever so much obliged to you."

Help her?—her, the mother of his darling? Help her? Yes, indeed, he would help her! What was the lifting of the bureau, when for her sake he would march to an instant and horrible death, gratefully smiling all the way? Move that bureau! Well, he rather thought he would move it, even if it dis-jointed his spine, and turned both of his knee-pans upside down.

His face was all aglow as he followed his darling's mother into the sitting-room.

"Here it is," explained the mother.

Mr. Miggs looked.

There it was, to be sure. It was a substantial-looking affair, and hugged the floor pretty close. It looked as if it had originally been designed for an improved dwelling house in a large city, but had subsequently been altered so as to suit its present purpose.

Mr. Miggs glared again at its massive and impressive front, and then at the carpet rolled up at its base, ready to be run under it at the proper time, and softly and in a subdued way spat on his hands. Mr. Miggs did not contrast favourably with the bureau. In shape Mr. Miggs is more devoted to length than to breadth, and if a bureau were capable of any feeling at all, this one might have hesitated to enter into a contest where the odds were, apparently, so fearfully great in its own favour.

However, Mr. Miggs appeared hopeful, believing, perhaps, that where there is a will there is a way, and continued to moisten the palms of his hands, while the mother made the necessary preparations.

When finished, she said—

"Now, Matilda, you hold the light while Mr. Miggs lifts the bureau, and I will push the carpet under."

This was an admirable plan. Matilda took the lamp, and smiled so prettily upon Mr. Miggs that he felt at once as if he were equal to about anything in the way of lifting that could reasonably be called for in this life. He reached down to take hold. He found that the bureau hugged the floor very close, and that by taking it at the bottom of one end it was bringing his face so tightly against the furniture as to seriously threaten a free respiration. Then he placed his head on one side, and this relieved his face. However, he had to reach so far down to take hold, that, being very tall, the bend in his back was so great as to admit of very little purchase in the lift. The brightness in his eye dulled perceptibly, and he was about to shift about for an easier position, when the voice of the mother smote his ear—

"Are you ready?"

"Yes, 'm," he hastily answered, and set to work with all the strength he was capable of, and with the enthusiasm the presence of Matilda could inspire him with. There was a steady strain for an instant which strained his eyes and almost snapped his spine. Up came that end of the massive structure, while the mother hastily sought to crowd the carpet under. She worked swiftly, but it seemed to him as if ages were passing. The weight grew more intense every second, his upper teeth closed upon his under lip and pinned it there. Every drop of blood

crowded into his face, until the heat therefrom made it smart; his eyes came very near to stepping out of their sockets, and were so incapacitated by the strain as to fairly impair their sight. He would have cried out had it not been for the presence of Matilda.

How he did despise that bureau! How he did loathe that carpet! Every second increased the agony. He could almost hear his spine crack, and he knew, just as well as he knew he was lifting there, that his back would never again spring back to its original shape. Sharp pains cut through his loins, and flashed across the back of his neck. Would she never get that carpet under? Could he possibly keep his agonizing strain another second?

"Just lift your foot a moment," spoke the mother at this juncture.

Considering that he was fairly blinded by pain and perspiration, this was not exactly a definite direction; but he could not ask which foot, as his teeth were pressed into his under lip in such a way as to preclude any utterance whatever. He lifted the right foot, and came very near to going over with the burden.

"The other foot," she cried.

He set down the wrong foot with an effort that he felt very nearly cost him his life, and, balancing himself an instant, he started up with the other foot. He saw the danger the moment it occurred, but it was too late. The strain had been so great as to completely unnerve him. There was an instant of vibration in the bureau, a quiver along every fibre of his being, a half-muffled cry of alarm from the mother, a scream from the daughter, a stumble, a heave and a rumble, and the unhappy Miggs was ploughing across the floor on his face, and the colossal bureau came over after him, hitting the alarmed and shrieking mother a rap on the head that not only confused her sentiments, but turned her completely round, and threw her upon her back.

The crash of the falling furniture, together with the screams of Matilda, fairly froze the blood in Mr. Miggs's veins. The mother was on her feet in an instant.

"Are you drunk?" she unexpectedly shouted at Mr. Miggs, who, having got up on his legs, and as near to a perpendicular as possible, was rubbing the small of his back with his hand, and staring helplessly at the prostrate bureau.

"Drunk!" he feebly ejaculated.

"Yes, drunk?" she repeated, with greater severity. "I don't see how any one sober could not have held up a bureau like that for a second. You are either drunk or diseased—and perhaps both," she added, with great bitterness, after a second of careful thought.

This was too much. The unhappy man took his hat and ambled off the premises, confident that the shining stars, which he could not see owing to the crook in his back, were looking down upon a broken heart and a broken spine under one and the same coat.

LATEST YANKEE REMEDY FOR BALDNESS.—Use brandy externally until the hair grows, and take it internally to clinch the roots.

The Original Sea Serpent.

SOME of the forms of ancient mythology were driven into England—the dragon and the dragon-slayer. They came first to Cornwall, where we have St. Petros and the Dragon, and to Ireland, where we have St. Patrick and the snakes. These two have a suspicious likeness to each other.

The legend was that when the first missionaries of Christianity came to England, they were thrown into a grotto of snakes that were gathered there. When St. Petros came, he determined to destroy them; he took bell, book, and candle, and went to the grotto, and began to exorcise them in such a manner that they began to devour each other. They devoured each other all day and all night, and all the next day, until there were only left two enormous snakes, which had devoured all the other snakes.

These snakes were half a mile long each. They were swelled with pride—full of fire and venom, and one of them had to devour the other. At last one of them did devour the other; then he was a mile long, because he had devoured the other snake. Then St. Petros sent that snake out to sea, and he passed over into Ireland, and there he called to himself the serpents of Northern Europe, from Scotland and the Hebrides; and all Ireland was filled with snakes, all gathered by this snake that was expelled from Cornwall.

In Dublin, St. Patrick set himself, and determined that he would have to drive the serpent and all his host away; and he went out to exterminate the snakes. At last he came to this big one. It took St. Patrick two weeks, and some authorities say three, with his bell, book, and candle, to destroy this snake near Dublin. And when he did so, that snake slowly began to put forth to sea, and when its head was going out of Cork harbour its tail was just going out of Dublin, 120 miles off.

Since that time that snake has been going about, appearing only occasionally in the vicinity of Nahant. It is to be seen during the summer season every year.

Under the Yellow Flag.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER III.

THE big sailor only stood upon his guard, chuckling gently the while, and his calm look and gigantic figure somewhat awed the Chinaman, who closed his knife with a snap, squeezed the lids of his little pig-like eyes closer together, and then placing his hands upon his ribs, he stood gazing defiantly at the sailor for a few moments, muttered a few words in his own tongue, and then went on swabbing the deck.

"They're rum beggars, aint they, sir?" the big fellow said to me the next instant.

"Rum enough," I said, laughing. "But don't you think it's a pity to annoy them? That fellow had his knife out, and might have attacked a weaker man."

"Well, I believe you're right, sir," he said, scratching his head—"that is, if it war a werry weak un;

for they are the out and outest cowards on the face of the mortal earth is the Chinese. 'Tis a pity to tease 'em, though; for of course they can't help being born savages, and it is their natur too, you see. But the chaps will do it, sir, and 'taint no use to tell 'em not. Sailors is fellers as must have something to tease or pet, just the same as big boys; and, 'pon my soul, sir, though I aint a little un, I often wonders whether I'm quite grown up, I feel so young; but I am growed up, you know, quite. You see, we aint got no pet, no monkey, nor nothing, so the chaps gets teasing old Kwi Tse there—Teapot as we calls him—and of course he don't like it. As for me, I didn't mean to hurt the poor chap's feelings, I only wanted to get him away from another dowsing, and his tail did look so uncommon temptin' that I did take a pull at it. But, Lord bless you, sir, they aint got no fight in 'em. Bring a swab here, Teapot."

The Chinaman obeyed, and soon the clean, white deck was drying in patches in the morning sun; while I, descending from my perch, hurried to meet the rosy little face that had just appeared on deck—a face that brought a smile into many another, as, light-hearted and joyful, she tripped to meet me. As for the big sailor—Timkin as he was called—he stood and grinned, and then gave his forelock a pull. Kwi Tse squeezed his eyelids together, and stared, before making some disparaging remark about feet to one of the sailors, who gave him a back-handed blow in the stomach for his pains, doubling him up, and telling him to "belay there."

Captain Black soon after appeared on deck with Mr. Stayman, and came up to us to give the morning greetings.

"I thought there would be no more flowers till we got ashore," said the old gentleman, in the most courtly manner; "and here we have one blushing on deck."

Eve laughed archly, saying—

"And to what order do I belong, Mr. Stayman?"

"Never mind about orders, Mrs. Leslie," said Captain Black, "unless they're orders for breakfast. Oh, here's Harris. Has my wife made the tea?"

"Breakfast won't be ready for another half-hour, sir," said the steward.

"Good job, too," said the captain. "Nobody wants it—do they, Mr. Leslie?"

"Well, for my part, I'm quite ready," I said, laughing.

And then, elate, happy, drinking in the exhilarating air, and proud of the bright little form at my side, I walked up and down the deck, ever and again pausing to look over the side, down, down, far below at some fish gliding through the transparent water, or over the myriad-tinted, rippling waves. My heart seemed too full of joy to allow of my speaking much; but it seemed to me that the silence was understood; and when our eyes met, and I gazed fondly into those of my fair young wife, my happiness seemed too great—too real; and though I tried to chase it away, the faint shadow of a foreboding cloud flitted for an instant across the bright vista of the future. But only for an instant: the next moment the happy present, the sunny glittering sea, the gliding, stately vessel speeding along

its liquid way, and our youth and love, could alone find room, to the banishing of all else.

"Come, come, come! who'd think you were married folks?" cried a shrill voice behind us; and turning, we confronted Mrs. Black, who caught Eve by the hands, kissed her tenderly, and then turned to me. "Why, you are just like a pair of silly young lovers. Such cooing ways; just as if you could do without your breakfasts. Come along down, do!"

"I had forgotten it was so near the time," I said.

"Of course you had, so I came to tell you, instead of sending Harris. There, come along, and—bless my soul, what's the matter?"

Matter? Matter? I had stopped short, and for a moment my senses seemed to reel, and I thought, in the wild rush of blood to my brain, that I should have fallen. Matter? What did it mean? Were my love and marriage real, or was I the victim of some delusion? What did that pale, trembling look mean on my wife's countenance? I had been too hasty in chasing away the foreboding cloud, which, as in revenge, came back more heavy and black, while as in an instant of time I saw once more the drawing-room at Mr. Herries', the leafy screen, and the scene in the conservatory; and as Eve, from being deadly pale, flushed to the roots of her hair, it seemed to me that two countenances wore precisely the same aspect that they had worn once before—an aspect I had almost forgotten, but which was now brought vividly before my mind; for there, standing before the cabin hatch, and evidently waiting for us to approach, was Paul Graham.

CHAPTER IV.

AS Paul Graham stood there in the bright sunshine—pale, handsome, and with one hand resting upon the hatch—it seemed so impossible that he could be present there in the flesh, that for a moment there was a reaction, the strange thoughts which had oppressed me giving place to an undefined feeling of dread; and a shudder ran through me as I thought that something had but now taken place, hundreds of miles from where we were now gliding so peacefully over the sunny waters, and that I was gazing upon some being not of this world.

But then such visions only appeared to one's imagination, and this had been seen by both; else why the deadly pallor and then suffusion of my wife's face? No, it was all real enough. The flood of thoughts came back with a violence almost sufficient to sweep blank my reason. I felt that I was a wretched man; that I had been deceived, tricked, and the power I had once felt of driving away unreal thoughts had gone. I could feel that my face wore a strange, pinched look, as if some great trouble had been oppressing me for long; and I knew now that suspicions, burning doubts which I had thought extinct, had only been smouldering, and waiting for fresh fuel to leap into flame.

"It is our secret though, not the world's," I told myself; and making some excuse to Mrs. Black about not feeling quite recovered, we stepped forward.

"No business out in the fresh air without breakfast," she said, hastily. "Always have something

to lean against before you go out of a morning. You shall have a wee taste of brandy in your tea, and that will put you right. Glad to see you out, sir," she continued, addressing Graham. "You've had a long bout, but never mind; next voyage you'll be as good a sailor as any of us."

He did not notice the remark; but as we came up stretched out a hand to each.

"I hope Mr. and Mrs. Leslie are quite well," he said, "and have fared better than I have."

Eve took his hand constrainedly, for she felt that I was watching every act, and I believe I stretched out mine, but I am not sure; for I could feel, as it were, all the blood in my body rushing towards my brain, and a sense of wild confusion troubled me so that my recollection of what I said or did is now misty and uncertain.

The embarrassing interview was interrupted by the stentorian tones of Captain Black, who roared up the cabin ladder—

"Are we to have any breakfast to-day, Mrs. Black?"

I remember being seated beside the captain's wife, Eve being in her old place upon the other side, just where, hot-eyed and feverish, I could sit and watch her every look. Brandy was added to my tea, and I drank it greedily. I could have dashed the spirit down by the tumblerful—anything to obtain forgetfulness; for I was mad.

Answering brusquely several questions respecting my health, I made my way again on deck, to encounter the Chinaman, standing and gazing straight before him, in a strange introspective manner, apparently unaware of what was passing around.

"He's on his opium, sir," said the big sailor, seeing my attention drawn to the sallow, flat face. "He always goes in for that when he's put out, and then he gets pitched about all the more, only he don't seem to feel or hear anything. It's all the world like being werry, werry drunk on 'long shore rum. He forgets everything when he's like this."

"Forgets everything when he's like this," I walked forward repeating. Then why should not I have some of this precious drug, and forget?—unless I sought forgetfulness elsewhere. But no, I could not do that. I was a coward, and I shuddered again. And yet, as I leaned over the side, and peered down into the liquid depths—pale blue, blue, purple, black—there seemed to be a strange fascination, a drawing sensation that was almost tempting.

I started then; for a little hand was laid upon my arm, and two anxious eyes sought mine.

"Are you ill, Willy? Tell me! What is it?"

I looked at her for a few moments without speaking, and in a voice trembling with emotion she repeated her question.

"Am I ill?" I said. "No, not ill; nothing. Let us go back."

"But tell me, darling. What—what is it?"

"Do you wish to know?" I said, almost fiercely.

"Do I wish to know? How can you speak to me like that? What have I done?"

"Done? You asked me what was wrong with me, did you not?" I said, angrily.

"Yes, yes," she faltered.

I drew her closer, so that I could whisper the

words; and then from between my cracked, parched lips they came, sending the blood back to her heart, to leave her pale as marble.

"I was thinking," I said, "of a scene in a conservatory, and of Paul Graham, holding tightly the hand and whispering words of love in the ear of one Eve Herries, a young lady betrothed to another."

I said these words coldly, and without an effort, watching their effect the while; and a bitter smile of misery crossed my lips as I saw her eyes dilate as if with horror, and heard her utter a low cry.

But the next instant I heard voices ascending, and, even in my mad rage, dreading a scene, I whispered—

"We are young married people, Mrs. Leslie, so continue to keep your secrets from the eyes of the world."

There was a reply—only for an instant, a stony, despairing look that spoke volumes; but I could not read it then, and with a forced gaiety walked up to the approaching group, and, in answer to inquiries, declared myself better.

CHAPTER V.

SEVERAL times during that day, Eve's eyes were directed towards me with a strange, imploring gaze, but only to be avoided; for the thoughts within my breast, kept back as they were beneath an enforced calm, grew hourly more furious. Once only she had an opportunity of speaking, and then she asked me to stay below in the cabin.

"I wish to speak to you, Willy; I have so much to say."

"I'll speak with Mr. Paul Graham to-night first," I replied.

And putting my own interpretation upon her looks, feeding the flame of anger therewith, I broke from her, and strode on deck.

Towards evening, the opportunity I had been seeking presented itself, and crossing to where Paul Graham was leaning over the bulwarks, I said, coldly—

"Will Mr. Graham favour me with half an hour's conversation to-night, somewhere forward, so as to be uninterrupted?"

His pale face flushed as I spoke; but he answered readily—

"Yes—at what hour?"

"Nine o'clock," I said, bitterly. "I don't understand their nautical time."

"I will be there," he said, calmly.

And then, trembling in every limb, I turned from him, to grow hotter still with passion on seeing Eve watching my movements as she stood upon the poop with Mrs. Black.

Long before the hour appointed, I was leaning over the bulwarks gazing down once more into the now dark sea, heedless of the rushing noise made as the vessel divided the waters. There was another noise too—a low, grating, panting noise—that I can now recall, though it failed to impress me then, as I looked listlessly down at what was no blacker than my own thoughts, wondering what would come of it all. Rousing at length, I turned suddenly round, to find Paul Graham beside me.

I had not heard him approach, but it was as

though some instinct had warned me that he was near. As I turned, he was looking at me through the shadowy night, and on seeing that I had become aware of his presence he offered me his hand.

"We are friends, I trust, Mr. Leslie," he said quietly.

"Friends!" I exclaimed, as with my clenched fist I dashed down his hand. "How dare you utter the word to me? Why are you here?"

I heard him breathe hard; and, dark as it was, could see his hands clench, but only to fall the next moment to his sides.

"I do not know by what right you ask me that question," he said, quietly; "but I will answer it frankly. I am going to England."

"Have you then given up your post?"

"Yes."

"And why, may I ask?"

"Because, William Leslie, I could not rest. I have had dreams, strange forebodings of coming evil, and I determined that it was my duty to you and to—"

"You dog! you villain!" I exclaimed, and catching him by the throat, after a short struggle, I had him down upon the deck. "Do you think me a fool or blind? Am I such a child that I am to be played with? You nearly uttered a name just now. Dare so much as whisper it, or to speak to her again, and I'll have your life. She is my wife, save in name, no longer; but that shall be no triumph to you. There are no conservatories here for pleasant interviews; and please to bear in mind that the lady has a husband now."

"Yes," he said, bitterly—"a jealous husband and a madman."

And with a strength of which I had not expected to find him possessed, he shook me off, and we stood face to face.

"Listen to me, William Leslie."

"Madman!" I exclaimed, furiously. "Well, perhaps; but not so mad but that I can resent all this—your cowardly, underhand means of getting on board here. And what for? To poison the lives of two people; for I believe her to have been innocent before trammelled by your vile machinations."

"Innocent as she is now," he said, sternly. "Let me explain, and I will do so."

"I want no explanations. I merely told you to come here to warn you. You have had your warning. Now, go, and act as if we were strangers."

"But hear me for a while."

"You called me mad just now," I said. "Are you mad yourself? Look here—I have a pair of these." And I drew out a pistol. "I tell you, Paul Graham, that by the God who made me, I could at this moment put an end to your life without a shadow of remorse, and follow you to the judgment the next moment. Now go, and tempt me no more."

He paused, essayed to speak, and then turned short round, and walked slowly towards the stern of the vessel till he seemed to disappear in the darkness. Then sitting upon the deck, I stayed there some time nursing my wrongs, and plotting for the future, seeing, hearing nothing, though I can now recall, by the light of what followed, a faint, panting noise, the rasping as of something against the ship's side, and

then some body, darker than the darkness around, seeming to glide over the bulwarks, to slip into the shadow, and then to disappear with hardly a sound, save once, when a rope's end seemed to be displaced, to fall with a light tap upon the deck.

I don't know how long I had been there; but I was at length aroused by a touch from a little cold hand, and I shivered as I rose; for it seemed as though my future was dead, that the light of my life had gone out, and that the happiness I had for a while enjoyed was far back in the past.

I knew the hand, but I touched it not; and when my wife spoke to me, I sternly arrested her, merely walking up and down the deck until her agitation was less marked, when we descended.

Again and again Eve tried to speak; but I stayed her. I wanted to hear nothing more. I knew enough, I told her; but at last, clinging to me, the words came unhesitatingly from her lips as she begged of me to listen.

"To what?" I said, savagely. "To your version of what took place in the conservatory?"

"Did you see us, then?" she asked, wonderingly.

"See you?" I sneered. "I did. And now perhaps you will favour me with an account of Mr. Graham's tender words."

"No," she said, simply, "I cannot tell you that. But you wrong me—wrong me grievously."

"Can you not plead for him too?" I asked, bitterly.

"Yes," she said, dreamily, "for he is to be pitied. I pity him much."

The words seemed uttered so simply, that I gazed upon her with astonishment; but the next moment I had recalled the scene which I had witnessed, and hurried out of the cabin, to encounter Graham upon the quarter deck; for in spite of my wishes to the contrary, it seemed to me that he was constantly crossing my path. Not that it was so, for I believe that he avoided me; but, shut together in the same ship, it was impossible but that we should meet frequently.

Upon this occasion he caught my eye, and approached me. I waited, for we were alone upon the deck.

"Are you cool enough to listen to me?" he said; "and will you try to believe me when I speak candidly the simple truth?"

I did not answer.

"I have been debating with myself whether it would be better to speak or keep silence, and I have decided upon the former. As I told you before, I was troubled at your leaving by strange forebodings—fancies, if you will—and a feeling that if I came I might be of service to you."

"To me?"

"To both. I came, then, to that end; and simple as my words may seem to you, I declare they are the truth, and that if you place any other construction upon them you wrong me grievously."

Wrong him grievously! The same words precisely that she had used. Was there any arrangement between them for blinding me? Had they communicated together now by letter?

These thoughts flashed through my brain as I stood there without speaking.

"I do not wish you to speak, to notice me," he

continued; "but I am grieved, hurt, to see that I caused an estrangement between you and——"

He stood flushed and angry the next moment, for in my rage I had struck him with the back of my hand across the mouth, and, turning on my heel, stood face to face with Eve, who uttered a low wail of misery as she saw Graham stand pressing his handkerchief to his blood-stained lips, but without word or sign of remonstrance.

The sight of my wife seemed to fan my rage, as, catching her wrist, I exclaimed—

"There he is, in pain; why not go and comfort him in his sufferings?"

And again I could not read the soft look of reproach directed at me, as with cruel grasp I crushed her tender arm, and led her away back to the cabin.

From that day, as event after event occurred, hardly a word passed between us.

Sea Lions.

I MAY mention here that one of the "sights" of San Francisco is "Seal Rock"—a group of three islets, lying between six and seven miles westwards of the city, at the southern entrance of the "Golden Gate." Here hundreds of sea lions may be seen diving in the water and basking on or climbing about the rocks, barking all the while so noisily as to drown the roar of the breakers.

A distinguished member of the troop is an old male, who lords it over the rest, and has held a favourite spot of rocky territory against all comers for many years. His weight is estimated at 2,000 lbs., and he has been honoured with the name of "Ben Butler," after the general who distinguished himself by executing certain "strategic movements" northward, whilst breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the South during the American civil war.

Almost overhanging the rocks, and about five hundred yards distant from them, on the edge of a cliff at the western extremity of the peninsula on which San Francisco is built, stands the "Cliff House," a famous restaurant and favourite resort of pleasure-seekers. It is the custom to drive out of town to it early in the morning, before the summer "norther" begins to blow, breakfast there, and watch the gambols of the sea lions, or "seals," as they are called.

In dusty weather the whole length of the road is watered, and is as smooth and well kept as the Prado of Marseilles, along which one drives so pleasantly intent on partaking of *coquillage* and *bouillabaisse* at Courty's restaurant, and enjoying the view from its balcony over the blue Mediterranean towards the *Iles d'If*.

The sea lions are under State protection, and no one is allowed to molest or injure them in any way. Without such guardianship, they would long since have disappeared by being wantonly shot by persons who cannot see a wild animal enjoying its existence without experiencing a murderous longing to kill it—for amusement! Mr. Woodward informs me that when permission is obtained for the capture of these animals for zoological exhibitions they are taken by the lasso.

Sea lions are also found on the Farallone Islands—a rugged mass of rock of about two hundred acres in extent, divided into seven islands, about twenty-nine miles from San Francisco, east of the Golden Gate, and just visible from the Cliff House, on the distant horizon, on a clear day.

These islands are utterly destitute of anything but seals and sea-birds, the latter of which are in great numbers. At the breeding season the islands are covered with nests, and the birds hovering over them look, from a distance, like a dark cloud.

At this period of every year they are visited by the *employés* of a trading company, who rob the nests, and supply the markets of San Francisco with the eggs. Several hundred thousands of eggs are gathered every season.

To return to our sea lions at Brighton. The male may generally be seen lying on his belly, stretched at full length, his head resting on the ground in front of him, and his great, sullen-looking eyes following the movements of any one he recognizes. The favourite attitude of the female is to sit on her haunches near the bars of the den, her nose held aloft, her head thrown back on her shoulders, and her eyes half closed, as if she were taking a nap. Sometimes she will lie with her fore and hind flippers tucked beneath her body, and holding her head erect; and then she looks wonderfully like a deer.

I believe that they are very short-sighted, and cannot clearly distinguish objects at a distance when on land. The eyes appear to be very sensitive to light and air, and are generally moist with tears. They are evidently more perfectly adapted for vision in water, and require the correction of this medium, like the immersion lenses now generally used with the microscope.

Although the movements of the sea lion on land are awkward and ungainly, the speed at which it can travel at its curious shambling canter has been very much underrated. I believe it can easily go for a short distance as fast as a man can run. But the water is its home. It can swim almost literally as swiftly as an arrow flies from a bow, and during its gambols will often leap three or four feet above the surface, with the back slightly arched, the fore-flippers folded back against the sides, and the posterior limbs extended straight out behind, plunging in again head first, and reappearing in the same manner after an interval of a few seconds. It will leap from the top of a high rock into the water, and, diving, follow a fish thrown by its keeper to the other side of the pool, and before the fish has sunk two inches towards the bottom, and as quickly as a bird could have flown to the spot, it will seize it, and appear above the surface with it in its mouth.

It is surprising how silently and smoothly an animal so large can enter the water. Although it will often jump or roll in with its body horizontal, and so send the water flying in spray, and swashing in waves about the sides of the pond, it can, if it please, leap into its bath from a considerable height almost without causing a ripple, and with as little noise as a water-rat makes when it slightly breaks the silence of a quiet evening by dropping, as one approaches, from its hole in the bank into a stream.

It is so difficult, when looking obliquely into the

water, to obtain a view of the action of the animal's limbs, that for some time I was unable to ascertain satisfactorily whence the great propelling power in swimming is derived, and how applied. In the common hair seal (*Phoca vitulina*), it is almost entirely in the hind limbs, which, brought close together and extended backwards, form a broad, spatulate, caudal fin, something like that of the porpoise. When swimming, the *Phoca* sculls itself along with this, by undulating its body very markedly from side to side; but in rapid motion, as in leaping and diving, it can also use it with an upward and downward movement, as the porpoise does.

In the *Phocidæ* the forelegs are so enclosed within the integuments of the body, that they have very little freedom of action—it is as if a man's arm and fore-arm were stowed away somewhere under his skin, and only his wrist and hand appeared outwardly from the shoulder—whereas the broad, fin-like front limbs of the sea lion and other eared seals have the whole of the fore-arms free, and the action of the remainder very little impeded by the flexible skin. This, of course, indicates aptitude for vigorous use; and, by peering down into the water from the skylight above it, I have been able to verify the statement that, when swimming, the *Otaria* propels itself chiefly, if not solely, by them. Their action is like that of the fore-flippers of the turtle, which they nearly resemble—namely, an alternate feathering forward, and sweeping back flat against the water, only with great rapidity and force. The hind limbs trail astern; and, although quite as well developed as those of the *Phocidæ*, appear to act principally as a steering apparatus, except when the animal leaps from the water on to a rock. Then one strong kick backward is generally given by them, whilst additional momentum is gained by the faster working of the fore-flippers, as a boat's bow is driven grating over the pebbles high upon a beach by three or four powerful strokes of well-handled oars.

A Tussle with "the Child."

ON being asked if they would wrestle with some of those present, they consulted together with much laughter—evidently in derision at the temerity of the untaught foreigners, who dared to enter into the field with them—but made no objection to the proposition.

Taking them on to the lawn, the Child, as being one of the youngest, and in pretty good fettle, was told off to represent the "tojins," and, throwing off his coat, he prepared to do battle for his cause, strutting about, and "challenging" vigorously, to their intense amusement.

Their chief signed carelessly to one of his subordinates to go and demolish the rash foreigner; and the man advanced to do his bidding, without taking the trouble to strip.

Both he and his associates seemed much surprised when the other, wasting no time in preliminaries, rushed in, and getting a good hold, gave him the back-heel almost before he was aware of the attack. He appeared somewhat disconcerted as he rose, and the champion of the party was directed to strip, and avenge the defeat of his comrade.

The Child, too, seeing that they meant to pursue matters in earnest, took the precaution of doffing everything to the waist, so as to give away no advantage with regard to obtaining a grip.

Seeing the two together as they stretched and "challenged" in front of each other—for the "young 'un" went through every form carefully—it seemed any odds on the Japanese. Standing as near as possible the same height, the professional must have weighed more than half as much again as his whiter-skinned opponent, whose hard training (for he was even now wound up for riding) had left hardly an ounce of flesh on his body.

Squatting down, they eyed each other for some seconds—the one determined to reverse the result of the last encounter, while the other felt fully the necessity of keeping out of any position in which his burly antagonist could bring his great weight to bear.

Now they are up and at work; the native shouting lustily, and endeavouring, while he contrives to ward off his opponent's first attempt at getting a grip, to knock him over by sudden rushes. In one of these, his tough head comes in contact with the Child's nose, causing him to see stars painfully, and slightly raising his dander.

From this kind of "butting" the ears of a professional wrestler will be found on examination to be battered down to shapeless masses of gristle.

For some while the Englishman is baffled in all his efforts to grapple with advantage—the slippery, greasy flesh offering nothing tangible to his grasp; however, he has got wind and condition on his side, and can afford to bide his time. At last he gets within his adversary's guard, and succeeds in slipping his arms round the bulky waist he can just clasp. At first this seems likely to avail him but little; for his enormous opponent raises him clean off his legs, and the unfortunate Child remains hugged in the unsavoury embrace up to the portly stomach. Still, his long legs are free; and he resists all attempts to put him down, though compressed as in the arms of a bear.

"The fellow certainly did squeeze me precious hard," he said afterwards; "but I wouldn't have minded that, if he hadn't smelt so strong of his infernal oil."

Once set down again, he adopts the offensive in his turn; and, pressing his chin on the other's chest, throws all his strength into a haul at the backbone.

Now does the metal forged by good beef and beer tell against the soft untempered stuff induced by rice and *saki*. To his astonishment, he feels the huge back gradually yield to his pressure; and a slight twist with the heel is all that is required to bring the weighty champion to the ground, to the surprise of his own party and the delight of the military.

The latter crowd round the Child, who is going through a fac-simile of the triumphal performance of the conqueror in the arena of yesterday, and—swelling with conceit—is "challenging" and swaggering with all his might. They feel his arms and legs, expressing their wonder loudly that there should be strength enough in those almost fleshless members to overthrow a trained wrestler and a Nippon!—
From Our Life in Japan.

Something like a Snake.

THE ship *Prosperity*, from London, reached one of the West India islands in May, 1856. One of the seamen, named Jarvas, having left the vessel, wandered about the island on a sultry day, such as are frequent in that part of the globe.

Being oppressed by the intense heat, and fatigued with previous exertions, he inconsiderately laid himself down to sleep, reclining his head on a small hillock, opposite a rock about ten feet high. He lay on his back; and his eyes, after he had slept a little, were directed, as the first object that met them, to the perpendicular height between them. What was his horror to discover on the top of it an enormous rattlesnake, with part of its body coiled up and the other projecting considerably over the precipice, with its keen and beautiful, yet malignant, eyes steadily fixed on him!

He felt as if charmed to the spot. The witchery of the serpent's eyes so irresistibly rooted him to the ground, that for the moment he did not wish to remove from his formidable opponent. The huge reptile gradually and slowly uncoiled its body, all the while steadily keeping its eyes fixed on those of its intended victim. Jarvas now cried out, without being able to move—

"He'll bite me! Take him away! take him away!"

The snake now began to writhe its body down a fissure in the rock, keeping its head elevated more than a foot from the ground. Its rattle made very little noise. It every moment darted out its forked tongue, its eyes became reddish and inflamed, and it moved rather quicker than at first. It was now within two yards of its intended victim, who by some means had dissipated the charm, and, roused by a sense of his awful danger, determined to stand on the defensive.

To run away from it, Jarvas knew, would be impracticable, as the snake would instantly dart its whole body after him. He therefore resolutely stood up, and put a strong glove which he happened to have with him on his right hand.

He stretched out his arm. The snake approached slowly and cautiously towards him, darting out its tongue still more frequently, and, when about a yard distant, made a violent spring.

Jarvas caught it in his right hand, directly under its head, and squeezed it with all his power. Its eyes almost started out of its head; it lashed its body on the ground, at the same time rattling loudly. He watched an opportunity, and, suddenly holding the animal's head while for a moment it drew in its forked tongue, with his left hand he, by a violent contraction of all the muscles in his hand, contrived to close effectually its jaws!

Much was now done, but much more was to be done. He had avoided much danger, but he was still in very perilous circumstances. If he moved his right hand from its neck for a moment, the snake, by avoiding suffocation, could easily muster sufficient power to force its head out of his hand; and if he withdrew his hand from its jaws, he would be in the power of its most dreaded fangs. He retained, therefore, his hold with both his hands. He drew its body

between his thighs, in order to aid the compression and hasten suffocation.

Suddenly the snake, which had remained quiescent for a few minutes, brought up its tail, hit him violently on the head, and then darted its body several times very tightly round his waist. Now was the very acme of his danger. Thinking, therefore, that he had sufficient power over its body, he withdrew his right hand from its neck, and took (the work of a moment) his large sailor's knife out of his pocket. He bent its head on his knee, and cut its head from its body, throwing the head to a great distance.

The blood spouted violently out; the snake compressed its body still tighter, and Jarvas, growing black in the face, thought he should be suffocated on the spot, and laid himself down. The snake again rattled its tail and lashed his feet with it. Gradually, however, he found the animal relax its hold; it soon fell slack around him, and, untwisting it and throwing it from him as far as he was able, he sank down and swooned upon the bank.

Some of the natives coming by and seeing the snake—but not noticing its head was cut off—and Jarvas motionless, concluded he was killed. However, they saw at last the condition of the snake, and that Jarvas was recovering a little; they gave him a little rum, unbuttoned his shirt, and, by friendly aid, in a very short time he recovered and returned to the vessel.

What will the naturalists say to this? The man Jarvas could never afterwards have borne to hear a rattle without a shudder.

The Egotist's Note-book.

THE *Times* correspondent says that at six o'clock one morning the batteries newly established on the hill above Radisovo gave the Turks an opening salute by sending a "bouquet" of eight shells together. What a posy for breakfast! Egg shells, with the eggs within, would have been more welcome, if accounts of the shortness of provisions are true.

From the same paper we learn that General Zotoff, with a flag of truce, asked leave to bury his dead near the redoubt at which his three assaults failed, and where they lie thick, but the Turks refused; consequently, the Russians have kept up a continual fire on the spot. As the dead lie mostly within three hundred yards of the Russians, this must breed a pestilence. Without being a partizan, is this warfare or the work of barbarians? The question is asked advisedly, especially as the Turks have continued to fire on the Red Cross ambulance men and the bearers of flags of truce.

The matrons of modern Rome who go to see trials, eat sandwiches, drink champagne, and glare at the prisoners at the bar on trial for their lives, are evidently working in the right direction, in the hope that before long they will be allowed to deliver the verdict, with thumbs up or thumbs down, whether the poor, shivering wretches are to be hung or not. The scene in court during the late trial has been absolutely disgraceful: fashionably-dressed ladies have

thronged the court, yawned, idled, and behaved throughout as if the real drama being enacted were a theatrical spectacle. Anything for a new sensation! And yet these ladies would shudder with horror at the conduct of their sisters who viewed the gladiatorial arena.

The powers that be will not stop the war, so Nature, in disgust, has set to herself. The rains have begun to make the country impassable, fever and dysentery are at work, and starvation is lending its aid. These are powers that will not be unanswered. And it was time, for the very sound of the word war has become nauseous.

It is not true that Mr. David James has been over to Italy, under the incognito of Perkin Middlewick, Esq., Vaudeville House, Strand, on purpose to see Veauvius fizz, as his son failed to be present at an eruption.

As there is mention of a French revolving cannon, designed for attacking torpedo boats with a continuous stream of shot or shell, the Ordnance Select Committee have brought forward for modification a weapon of the same species, which has, however, been for some considerable time in their possession, but not regarded as of any particular value until the demand for a special antidote for torpedo craft became manifest. This is delightful! Oh, what energy and ingenuity we bestow on the invention of contrivances to destroy life! And man was made a little lower than the angels!

Sir John Bennett ought to go now by the motto, "Third time never fails." He deserves to get on, for his perseverance against difficulties; and the electors ought to insist upon his being received, to vindicate the rights of public election. The fact is, the City works are in such an exceedingly rickety condition that there is a wholesome dread of their being overhauled. If Sir John had been fat, stuffy, and with a mind just strong enough to judge when port was good, and able to tell the difference between real turtle and mock, the Corporation would have said, "That's the man for our money."

Most people who embellish their gardens seek for bright blossoms, forgetful of the beauty of foliage when, at the present time, the Virginia creepers everywhere are one glorious flush of crimson. We hear a great deal of the gorgeous tints of the American woods in autumn. Cannot our nurserymen acclimatize a few more such growths as the above creeper—one, however, which is far more given to run?

Sir John Lubbock has been lecturing; and he said that there was a North American plant which actually seized and devoured the insect which alighted on its leaves. By means of a diagram the lecturer illustrated this process by which the insect-devouring plant captured its prey. Representations of open and closed leaves were shown. Sir John said that a number of interesting experiments had been tried with those leaves, and it had been found that they

very much disliked cheese, which disagreed with them, and made them extremely ill. Pretty little flower, from my lady's bower, you are not the only object in creation with whom cheese disagrees. I have known men who—— But why recall these pains of a weak digestion?

The more sensible people seem to be growing awake to the fact now that the punishment adjudged to the four prisoners connected with the Penge case is awful in its severity. Letters are appearing on all sides; and from these letters it seems that they think it extraordinary that to-day a weak, foolish girl of twenty, who seems to have been entirely led by one male prisoner, is sentenced to death for her participation in the cruel treatment of poor Mrs. Staunton; to-morrow, a man who kicks his wife to death, her injuries being described as frightful, is sentenced to fifteen years' transportation. And these were the sentences passed by the same judge on two successive days.

The stipendiary magistrate for Brighton, Mr. Bigge, has stated that since his announcement that he intended to strictly enforce the law respecting vicious dogs at large, he had been inundated with remonstrances from all parts of the country. The following, bearing the Hull postmark, and written in a female hand, being a fair sample of them:—"In dealing with a case respecting a boy being bitten—a little Maltese dog—your decision was most inhuman and cowardly. The dog was quite right in defending itself. I hope you will receive severe retributive punishment before you leave this world. How would you like to be muzzled?" The communication was on a post card, signed "Linda." Mr. Bigge said the only commentary he need make upon it was that reports of shocking deaths from hydrophobia were made almost daily in the London papers. Dear Linda! How indignant she seems to be. I wonder how old she is! Of course she kisses its pretty little black nose-ey-posey, and calls it a dear, little "doggy-woggy;" and holds up her blushing cheek to be licked by the pretty red tongue of her darling "ickle" pet, I'm afraid.

HE put an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains, but the enemy, after a thorough search, returned without anything.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER XI.—A REFORMER.

"WHO'S him, Dick?" said one of the Waveley National School children, as he had to halt in his game of marbles to let "him" pass, which was effected without the administration of the customary spatula wave of the hand called by courtesy a bow.

But Dick could not give the required information, and the unknown passed on in the direction of the Rectory, quite unconscious that he formed an attraction which drew forth head after head from the cottage doors he passed. He was ignorant of the good stares taken after him till he was out of sight—the pursuit of knowledge most religiously observed in country villages.

But nobody knew who he was, even when those who had not seen him heard him described by those who had. They soon, however, arrived at the goal of their ambition in the village, for the gentleman in question, with a Bible in one hand, a very, very attenuated umbrella in the other, and a packet of assorted tracts, at six shillings per hundred, beneath his arm, began visiting from house to house, and announced himself as the new curate. He may be described as tall, thin, pale, fair, and rather given to pimples upon the forehead, whose noble expanse was partly concealed by the well-smoothed, centrally-parted, bird-sandy hair, redolent of castor oil pomade.

The owner of the above forehead might have been about twenty-five; his face was very clean shaven; his teeth very white, as also were his hands and cravat; while his whole body was most rigidly stiff and black—even the ordinary shirt-front of daily life being carefully covered by a silken semi-cassock, or whatever the name of the garment might be which did duty for the ordinary waistcoat.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Teedate, at the shop, while attending upon Mrs. Bloueel, the butcher's wife—not the lady famed in the old catch for her sanguinary behaviour—"Ah!" said Mrs. Teedate, "what in all conscience he can want with a curate, I don't know. It isn't so much that he has to do."

But the rector thought he did require help, and his thoughts turned in that direction when the perpetual curacy of Belledale fell into his living; when as there was service at both places every Sunday, and he was not ubiquitous, he considered it necessary to engage the new curate.

Waveley folk had been jogging along very comfortably under the rector's spiritual régime. They had been christened by him; grown up; grown old; confessed every week that they were miserable sinners; listened to his quiet, earnest, old-fashioned sermons; and then gone to sleep "close to parson's garden," with a wooden tablet to mark the spot, while for education the young had been under Mr. Boreham, whose wife taught the sewing. Timothy Boreham had held his post of master of the school for many years, to the satisfaction of Mr. Glebeley, who regularly expressed it by inviting the master to dine with him twice a year—Madeline Glebeley

taking his wife under her charge upon such feast days. But the rector had another way of showing his satisfaction, and that was by sending down to the school-cottage sundry baskets of the famous fruit and vegetables—the latter act being one of greater importance than the former; for the rector felt a wrench at his heart every time he cut or picked the produce of his garden; for, as he said to Madeline, "It does seem such a pity," and to his way of thinking it was like destroying a picture by cutting out some particular group in the canvas.

Mr. Boreham had only one defect in Mr. Glebeley's eyes. It was a serious defect, certainly, and gave the poor man anything but an ennobling aspect; but it interfered in no wise with his duties as a teacher, being as far from the brain as was possible; and in justice to the rector it must be said, that he would not have retained an unsuitable person to teach the poor children of his parish. Mr. Boreham's defect was a wooden leg; and upon wet days this used to go "plug, plug," down the rectory gravel walks, leaving a hole for every step the worthy man took—the wetter the day, the deeper the impression; so that, fond as Mr. Glebeley was of displaying the treasures of his garden, it was only after a long dry season that Mr. Boreham was invited to inspect them.

But things were going now to be put to rights in Waveley. There was to be an orthodox revival; not a muffin struggle, with hold-forth accompaniments to improve the occasion, and a collection afterwards for the benefit, &c., &c., but a thorough wakening-up of the affairs of the church-militant in the village, which the Reverend Augustus Newman, the new curate, considered had been sadly neglected; while, for his own private consideration, before he had been there many days, he had made out the following memoranda:—

"The School. (Mem.)—Decidedly bad.

"Church Services. (Mem.)—Only two on Sunday. No saints' days observed. No week-day services. To propose morning prayer, and lectures on Wednesday and Friday.

"Clothing Club. (Mem.)—Not well managed.

"Coal Club. (Mem.)—Ditto, ditto.

"Dorcas Charity. (Mem.)—Something of this kind should be introduced.

"District Visiting. (Mem.)—Should be instituted immediately. State of morals and religious knowledge extremely low.

"General Mem.—In labouring in the vineyard, bring a little well under cultivation before attempting more. The above sufficient for the first few weeks."

The notions of the Reverend Augustus Newman upon the management of a parish slightly differed from those of his senior, who, however, merely looked upon the peculiarities of Mr. Newman as proceeding from excess of zeal, and considered that when he had worn the surplice for a few years the new curate would settle down into a quiet, business-like clergyman. But Mr. Newman's ideas were high, excessively high, and he showed them in every way, even to the shape of his very long-skirted frock-coat. The notes which appear above

were jotted down in a journal which he kept, bound in limp clerical cloth, red-edged, with a mitre upon the side, and all the saints' days brought by the printer's art very prominently into notice.

Now a great deal might be said respecting Mr. Newman's first *entrée*; but as the pen of the historian is prone to exaggerate, a few more extracts from the above journal may not be considered as being out of place—such extracts, of course, bearing upon them the "Hall" mark of authenticity.

"Aug. 1st, Sunday.—Seventh after Trinity.—Went to the school. Children very brusque in their manner. Only one teacher beside the master and his wife. Master too authoritative. Children ignorant. Set texts.—Church. Preached. Subject, Baptism. Congregation decidedly not of an attentive turn. Singing bad. No intoning. Hymns require changing. Clerk unnecessary.—Afternoon.—School and service. Read prayers. Rev. Charles Glebeley preached. Very evangelical views. Decidedly unsatisfactory.

"Aug. 3rd, Tuesday.—Visited all day. *Most* unsatisfactory. People truly parents of school children. Rude and abrupt in manner. Tracts often refused. At one house threatened: old woman seized kettle to pour hot water in my boots. Pitied her and left. Questioned parishioners upon worldly and religious subjects, but found it hard to get answers.

"Mem.—Strange as yet. More at home shortly.

"Aug. 5th, Thursday.—Weary day. Much to contend with. Visiting: called at the mill. Mrs. Elton, woman of most Christian spirit. Son, Cambridge graduate, but at present at home. Able to give him much advice, and raise his ideas. Introduced to Mr. Elton. Brand to rescue from the burning. At present an evil man and a scoffer. Talked of the state of the poor, but told that he never gave in charity. Quoted texts to him. Seemed morose and harsh. Bluntly told not to call again, as not wanted. Went."

The above notes, taken at random, show that Mr. Newman had much to contend with on first entering Waveley; but he set determinedly to work upon his improving mission, greatly to the disgust of the old stagers, who had a thorough dislike to anything new.

But the Reverend Augustus Newman had not come alone, for he had brought with him a sister, who appeared to be his opposite in everything besides sex. Upon the first encounter she looked as though Nature had tried to make a pair of Alice Vaughans—one fair and the other dark—and that this was the dark one; but upon a closer examination, a considerable difference could be detected. For one thing, Annie Newman, in addition to being short, was decidedly disposed to be "podgy;" and instead of the sharp, keen looks of Alice, she always appeared to be having a battle with her features to keep them under subjection, so as to preserve a dry, serious aspect—one that would well accord with the position of her brother, as the new curate of Waveley. The pair had taken apartments near the mill, at the residence of Miss Cinques, an elderly maiden lady, whose abode was of the prim, prim, and such

a one as would be sure to attract the attention of a lover of order like the Reverend Augustus. The gravel walk up to the front door was the very perfection of gravel walks, bordered upon either side with lavender-blossomed thrift—emblematic herb. The door-step was of the whitest, and the brass knocker of the brassiest; but there was something uncomfortable about Miss Cinques' house, and the on-looker would be some few moments before he could detect the cause. It was not that the house was not of a goodly shape, nor that the windows were not clean and curtained, nor yet that the stucco was not neatly coloured—there was something else; and that was the position the house occupied. It looked, as it stood by the roadside, as though it had been built and put there for the present, or until a better place could be found for it. For Mr. Cinques *pater* had built the house to live in himself, retired; and being a man of very genteel ideas, he did not wish for trade to mingle with his retirement, especially now that he had disposed of the goodwill and fixtures of the butcher's business at Ramsford. So he built his house upon the piece of land he had purchased, was his own architect, and cleverly contrived that the mill business should not interfere or be intrusive; for he made his house with a blank wall where the front should have been, while a sort of semi-front and back were made, looking in a one-eyed manner up and down Waveley Green-lane, thus preserving the genteel at the expense of the picturesque.

Miss Cinques was not above talking about her new lodgers, her expressed opinion being that Miss Newman was a very nice, sensible girl; and Miss Cinques was not far out in her reckoning, for Miss Newman's nature matched well with her looks; and it really was a fact that she did work hard to preserve the serious aspect she wore, and many a little skirmish had she with Augustus respecting the observance of saints' days and dress.

"Now, it's of no use, Gus," she exclaimed, soon after their arrival at Waveley. "I want to be good; but I'm not going to do precisely as you like. If you don't get a piano, I won't stop. And as to wearing one of those absurd, pokey, Sister of Mercy bonnets, and black gowns and mantles, and white caps, why, I won't do it. What do I want with a cap?"

An unbiassed observer would have immediately said "Nothing," as he gazed upon the mass of luxuriant black tresses the maiden shook over her shoulders as she spoke. And the Reverend Augustus said nothing; for his sister did not give him time to speak, but continued—

"You know, Gus, mamma would not approve of it. I will always go and see any poor person who is ill, and read, and teach little things, and be as kind as I can; but I really do not see how I can be more Christianlike to people by dressing myself up like an ugly old guy. And then, too, I can't go and give them tracts, and talk to them like you do to the little Sunday school children. I'm sure they don't want it, and don't like it; and I'm sure I don't want it, and don't like it; and that just matches beautifully; so you need say no more to me about district visiting. If you can get Miss Cinques, and

some more old maids like her, to go, why you may; but I don't mean to. I'll look serious when we are out, and all that; but I don't intend to do precisely as you like, sir!"

Then followed two shakes and a toss of the head, which made the long curls glisten and dance, while the little face looked as prettily imperious as possible.

"For shame, Annie!" said her brother, with dignity, as he raised his eyes from the copy of "St. Thomas à Kempis" he held in his hand. "For shame, child!"

"Child, indeed!" cried Annie. "Why, you are only five years older than I am. But there, that will do. Oh, I do wish I had a piano."

"It would be much better for your welfare, Annie, if you would do as I wish you," said her brother.

"La-la-la, la-la-la, la-a," sang Annie. "I say, Gus, that's such a pretty new valse just out. I should like it so. I heard it before we came down here, and don't know the name. Do you?"

"I do not trouble myself about such trifles, Annie," said her brother, pompously; "and I wish you would not prattle so much."

"Oh, but Gus," said his sister, with her great eyes twinkling with merriment, "you'll have to marry the vicar's—rector's—incumbent's—what's his name's daughter. She's such a pretty girl. She called here with her father and a Miss Warne, or Vaughan, or something—a little blue-eyed fairy thing. They came while you were out, and we are to dine at the rector's on Saturday. You should have been at home."

"I am glad I was not, Annie," said the curate; "for I was far better employed."

"La-la-la, la-a," sang Annie. "But I'm afraid you have no chance, Gus. You're such an old goose where there are ladies. You used to be a nice boy before you took to all that High Church stuff, and—"

"Really, Annie," exclaimed her brother, "I cannot sit here if you will persist in talking such idle nonsense. I must request that you will be silent, or I must leave the room."

Annie Newman took up a Berlin wool slipper she was working, sighed, looked at the canvas, and made a grimace at it, which compressed her mouth up into a position that would have prompted kissing even to a serious mind, for she had very cherry lips. She then looked at her brother, and yawned. Then the needle wanted threading, and, as every one knows, wool needles are not easy to thread; for, in spite of that long, oval eye—squeezed Chinese—the wool will not hold together, and often renders several essays necessary. So in this case; and by the time the needle was "thridled," Annie Newman yawned again, and looked out of the window, and as she did so performed an act which ought to have been attended to before—put her little, soft, white hand before her mouth.

"I say Gus, dear," she exclaimed. "Look here. Who are these?"

"I don't know," said her brother, without raising his eyes from the notes he was making, and therefore telling something very like a fib.

"One is a nice-looking fellow," continued Annie,

peeping from behind the curtain. "Such a giant, Gus! You would look a 'scrubby boy' beside him. He looks like a great Saxon hero. Such whiskers! And the other looks—well, I don't know how he looks. Why, they've gone into the house where that ugly miller lives—the man who was so rude to you. I'll go and ask Miss Cinques who they are."

"Annie," exclaimed her brother, "for shame! I desire that you do nothing of the kind. Only consider—"

But Annie Newman had not stayed to consider, for she disappeared in a moment, and soon after returned with her news.

"Why, Gus, one's Squire Vaughan's son—the great one is; and he's that pretty little thing's sister—no, I mean she's his sister; and the other's Mr. Frank Henderson, and he's at college, and they say he's to be married to—whom do you think? Guess, Gus? You won't. Then I'll tell you. They say he's to be married to Miss Glebeley. Only think! And there won't be a bit of chance for poor old Gussy. Never mind; you shall have the little fairy, and I'll have the big hero. I say, Gus."

"Well, Annie," said her brother.

"I hope they won't make such a stupid of that one at college as they have of some one I know."

The Reverend Augustus Newman did not condescend to speak, and his sister went on with her Berlin slipper.

CHAPTER XII.—MRS. ELTON'S PRESERVES.

"CLISH—clash—clangle," came a resonant noise from the kitchen at the Mill cottage.

"There now," exclaimed Mrs. Elton, "if that's one thing that girl has broken this week, I'm sure it's twenty. What servants are coming to I don't know. What with the airs, and the dress, AND the breakages, one had better a great deal do the work oneself, for girls now are worse than useless. There's no getting a bit of dirt up without being always at their elbow; and if they are left alone to dust the best parlour, one day it's a glass shade, another it's a china ornament, then the broom goes through the window, or else, if there is a fire, the hot coals are poked and rattled out upon the new hearth-rug. The other day the flower vase was upset, and a great bit chipped out of the edge, so that it looked like one of Frank's pieces of bread and butter after a bite, and there was the water swimming all over the table, and soaking into Tenyson and Browning."

"Poor fellows!" said Frank, laughing.

"Now, don't be absurd, dear," said Mrs. Elton; "you know I mean soaking into the covers of my best books. The candle grease upon the stair carpet is really fearful; and as to the way in which hot cinders are allowed to go flaring into the dripping pan, it's quite shameful."

"The horrors of housekeeping, Miss Glebeley," said Frank.

Madeline looked very serious, and shook her head at him, while Mrs. Elton went on, with her dissertation upon servants and their feelings.

"Do you know, my dears, I was quite ashamed the other day when Mr. Glebeley called. The place smelt for all the world like old Crowder's candle-

house at Edgeton, that used to come whiff into Miss Etchings's establishment for young ladies; and because it came so often, and was such a nuisance, the Chowdrys, those Indian girls, were taken away."

"What used to come in so often, mamma?" said Frank. "What used to come whiff in—the candle-house?"

Miss Glebeley bent her head over her work and smiled.

"Now, my dear boy," said Mrs. Elton, "what nonsense you do talk. How can you be so absurd? Why, the smell, of course. We always used to call it mutton-chop day when the nasty puffs used to come in. Now, Mary, mind how you put the tray down. See, there, how you are treading upon Miss Glebeley's dress. For goodness' sake, do be more careful."

Poor Mary, always rather red respecting the eminences of her countenance, which looked as though the sun of good humour were rising somewhere from out the clouds of discontent, and brightening her plain face—poor Mary turned redder than ever, and then in her confusion tripped over the edge of the hearth-rug, to the imminent risk of depositing the contents of the tray in the visitor's lap, making Mrs. Elton terribly wroth, for Miss Glebeley was a guest whom for special reasons she delighted to honour. But she felt that the scolding earned must, along with the query respecting the clatter in the kitchen, be put off for the present; though the cause of the noise was evident in the chipped and whitened edges of the tea tray. So, after two or three furtive frowns at the delinquent, Mrs. Elton proceeded to make the tea.

The first step was taken by giving the teapot a foretaste of the scalding draught it was shortly to receive; and then Mrs. Elton turned to the tea-caddy for the requisite number of spoonfuls for visitor and pot; but before the tea could be reached, the caddy had to be opened; and before the caddy could be opened, the keys had to be found. So Mrs. Elton plunged her arm up to the shoulder in an opening which lay amidst the voluminous folds of her best black silk, and then and there searched for the bunch.

At such a time Mrs. Elton's countenance was well worthy of study: it displayed a curious intermixture of surprise, pleasure, vexation, and anxiety, rippling, as it were, amidst the features. Her hand, to judge from the play of her countenance, must have come in contact with numberless little household treasures that had been considered as gone for ever. Every now and then something was chased up into a corner, and then fished up to the surface—something which had been sought for with sorrow, and cost poor Mary many a scolding for having thrown away with the ashes, or shaken out of the cloth, or poured down the sink, or made away with in some thoroughly domestic manner; but which now turned up in Mrs. Elton's redoubtable pocket. There was the ivory apple scoop, the little text book, the bodkin case, the silver stiletto, and the hundred other things that it is absolutely necessary should be kept warm in a middle-aged lady's pocket; but there were no keys forthcoming.

At last, when it seemed evident that they were not there, and Mrs. Elton's supply of words expressive of vexation was entirely exhausted, Mary was summoned.

"I must have left them on the dressing-table, Mary."

"Yes, mum," said Mary, twiddling her apron, but without stirring from her place.

"Well, why don't you fetch them?" said Mrs. Elton.

"Pleas'm, what, mum?" said poor Mary.

"Why, the keys, you foolish creature," exclaimed her mistress.

Mary hurried off, and had just reached the table in question, as indicated by the deadened "thud-thud" of her heavy foot overhead, when, with an outburst of pleasant smiles, Mrs. Elton exclaimed—

"There they are;" produced the keys from her pocket, trotted off to the stair foot, and began jingling the bunch, bell-fashion, as a signal to Mary that they were found.

Mrs. Elton could make a much better cup of tea when Sampson was out than when that worthy was at home. It may be that she felt less nervous, and could pay more attention to the pot; or perhaps the pot sulked, or jibbed, when the master was present, and would not draw. However, be that as it may, the tea was always of a richer and deeper cairngormy hue when Sampson was absent; and it was after creaming and sugaring one of these cups that Mrs. Elton observed to Madeline—

"Now, pray make a good tea, my dear. It is so good of you to come, for I know what a stupid old woman I grow, and that boy says I am always talking."

MILITARY SOBRIQUETS.—The 2nd Foot bear on their colours a Paschal lamb, and were known as "Kirke's Lambs." They were once commanded by the celebrated Colonel Kirke, and formed part of the first English garrison of Tangiers. The 3rd are known as the "Old" Buffs, the oldest English regiment in the service, and formed originally from the city train bands; the 9th, the "Holy Boys;" the 19th, the "Green Howards;" the 28th, the "Slashers," or "Old Brags" (the latter name derived from a sometime colonel); and this regiment always wore the regimental number on the back, as well as on the front, of their caps, in commemoration of an occasion in Egypt when they were attacked by French cavalry while formed in line; there was no time to form square, and their colonel, equal to the occasion, gave the command, "Rear rank right about face," and back to back the gallant Slashers received the enemy. The 47th are known as "Lancashire Cauliflowers;" 50th, "Blind Half Hundred" (this regiment is said to have been once ordered by its commanding officer to charge a stone wall, and obeyed); 56th, "Old Pompadours;" 62nd, "Wiltshire Springers;" 87th, "Faugh-a-Ballaghs;" 101st, "Dirty Shirts;" and the 1st Royal Scots, who, on being embodied in the English army and laying claims to great antiquity, were dubbed by their profane Southern comrades as "Pontius Pilate's Body Guards."

An Indian Fishery.

"STOOP down, Jack—stoop down!" cried Bill, at the same moment clapping his hand on my shoulder, and forcing me on to my knees on the ground.

I loaded my gun in a hurry, and the same instant three deer bounded into view from a thicket, two of which were females. I fired at the male, without apparently any effect, which, to my great astonishment, was followed by a shot from Bill a minute after, when the animals had disappeared.

As I turned to ask the reason, there was a savage yell, and an arrow whizzed past my ear, to stick in a tree just behind us.

"Indians!" I ejaculated.

And my companion, who was calmly reloading his rifle, said quietly—

"Only one."

"Did you touch him?" I asked.

"No. I only wanted to warn him that he was seen. If he did but know it, I have had his face at the end of my gun for full half a minute, so steady that I could have chosen between his right eye and his left. He must be either a Flathead or a Serpent. Let's have a look at the arrow."

"But why on earth," said I, "did you fire, if you didn't want to hit him?"

"Because it doesn't do ever to let an Indian, be he friend or foe, think that he has succeeded in eluding your vigilance," he added, examining the arrow. "There's no doubt about it—he is a Tchinouk, a Flathead, that is."

Bill Watson, my guide and companion in this visit to the Rocky Mountains, was continually astonishing me by some fresh instance of his sagacity. I could scarcely believe that he could tell to what tribe the savage had belonged by looking at the arrow; but that became nothing beside many other proofs I had before we parted. He was well acquainted with the Oregon territory, and had been so much among the Indians that he had learnt a great deal of their extraordinary quickness of observation.

"I say, Jack," he said, after a pause of thought, "you are so fond of the Indians, and want to see as much as you can of them—what do you say to paying the Flatheads a visit?"

"Oh, I'm willing," said I; "but after this little incident, I should think there's some doubt as to what sort of a reception we might meet with."

"That's quite a mistake," was the answer. "If you are ready to venture, we will have in their company a good supper of salmon. This fellow was mistaken. He took us for some of the miners who have lately come up the river Fraser, looking for gold, which, between you and me, they won't find; and these gold hunters, as is the custom with them wherever they meet Indians, have made war on them, and turned them from quiet, inoffensive people into treacherous enemies. I am going soon to find out what to expect. Wait for me here."

As he concluded, he descended the side of the hill up which we had climbed, and stopped at the foot of the valley by the side of a small river which wound its way between the hills; then, having detached a long and strong branch from a willow

which grew there, he proceeded carefully to peel off the bark, which he rolled up so as to make a couple of horns in the form of a speaking trumpet, one nearly twice as long as the other.

"Now," said he, when he had climbed up to my side again, "you shall see—no, hear—how one can talk to the Tchinouk from a distance."

With these words he placed the end of the longer of his two instruments in his mouth, and gave a long, loud, prolonged whistle. The next minute, when the distant echoes, which had carried the sound as far as the blue mountains which bounded the horizon, had died into silence, he took his other speaking trumpet, and gave vent to two other notes, short and altogether different to the first. After which he turned to me.

"Now, we must wait a bit."

"What do you suppose is the good of that?" I asked. "Even if your friends, the Tchinouks, heard you whistle, what would be the good? Do you expect them to come all the way from their encampment, wherever it may be, to see what you want with them?"

My companion laughed.

"Not exactly. They will understand that as well as if I had spoken to them in words."

"Then what did you say to them?" I inquired, somewhat incredulously.

"That we were two friends of theirs, wishing to go to their village. I have no doubt that, at this minute, they are considering what answer to make."

For the next hour we remained there, patiently sitting at the foot of the tree which had been struck by the arrow of the unfriendly savage, who, by the way, had disappeared directly after sending it.

From our elevated position, Bill, who had spent the last twenty years of his life amidst the Sierras of North America, pointed out to me the different mountain ranges, with their respective names, as readily as he might have done on a map.

"The peaks which you see on the horizon to your left," he said, "are the Blue Mountains; the high peak, with the snowy crest, which the sun is on just now, is Mount Shaste; doesn't it look as though a few hours' walking would bring us to it?"

"Yes. How far is it? Ten miles?"

"Fifty. Farther on, towards the south, the Blue Mountains join the Californian chain, which you know already. The little river which runs there below us is the Chilcotin, a tributary of the Fraser; we are now in the fork formed by the two rivers."

At this moment, a distant sound, which I had scarcely heard, arrested him. He sprang to his feet.

"Listen, Jack; the Indians are replying."

The faint noise which had reached our ears seemed to me at first to come from one of the deep valleys surrounding us, and I should have attributed it to a cow. It, of course, was to me perfectly unintelligible, but spoke so plainly to my companion that as it ceased he exclaimed—

"Come along. The brutes only want to receive one of us; but we must both go, all the same for that. They know we are coming now, and that we are friendly, so that's all I care about."

As we descended the slope towards the river, he added—

"Don't imagine that these Indians we are going to see are very fierce and warlike, and all that sort of thing. They would any time rather fish for salmon than fight; and to make them hostile to us it has needed all the injustice, tyranny, and treachery of the gold-seekers who have lately overrun the Fraser and its tributaries."

We had reached the bottom of the valley, and were among the bushes which covered the left side of the river Bill called the Chilcotin—the course of which we followed to the north. The ground was marshy, with here and there thickets of nut-trees and arbutus. In the glades were birch, willow, and aspen trees; and nearly everywhere a thick grass, coming as high as the waist, covered the boggy earth. But though we had only a week left New California behind, there was no more of that lush vegetation whose brilliant verdure, with here and there bright patches of colour, I had so often admired. We felt already the approach of the cold northern regions.

We had reached the belt of transition, where the luxuriant life of the more southern parts enters into a contest with the unfavourable conditions which a little farther on make the earth barren and sterile.

While noticing this, I carefully watched the surface of the water; for a minute before, a flock of wild geese had taken flight before I could fire, as I was taken by surprise. Suddenly, Bill, who was a few yards off on my right, signed to me to join him, and said, as I approached—

"It appears to me that you did wound the stag this morning. Come along, and let us find him; for he can't be far from here."

"What makes you think that?"

"Because I have been following his traces ever since we started; and here, already, is a place where the poor brute has lain down. See for yourself."

I saw, indeed, that the grass at our feet was broken and crushed, but should never have discovered from that that my game had halted there in consequence of its wound.

"He has received your ball in his right hind leg, which is broken, and with that wound he can neither climb nor descend. It follows, then, that we shall find him in some of these thickets covering the flat ground before us."

We continued our way, Bill leading, and in less than five minutes came upon my stag. He lay on his side, panting, and as we came up endeavoured to rise, but failed; and with one stroke of his little hatchet, my companion put him out of its misery.

Having tied the legs together, we set off in quest of a good tree on which to hang it, to be out of reach of wolves, until we could send some of the Indians to fetch it later on, when we caught sight of one of the latter standing by the riverside about fifty yards off. Hardly had my companion glanced at him, when he exclaimed—

"I say, Jack, if that isn't a friend of mine, unless I'm much mistaken. I met him at Fort George, where he was known as Bob. He is the chief of a tribe of Flatheads."

He then called out to the savage something in a language of which I did not understand a single

word. The Tchinouk Bob advanced very leisurely, until, recognizing Watson, he hastened his steps, and joined us, exchanging with him a grasp of the hand, and immediately they began an animated conversation, doubtless relating to the gun fired in the morning by Bill, and the arrow which had been intended for us. While they talked I observed the Indian attentively, and found that there was nothing characteristic about him to distinguish him from the greater part of the aborigines I had met already in the plains and on the Californian mountains, whenever I approached the north. It is always the same expression of countenance—or perhaps I should say want of expression; for the faces of these savages, except when animated by some brutal passion, express simply nothing at all but stupidity.

It is quite in vain that the traveller looks among the miserable tribes that wander along the Sierra Nevada as far as the ocean, and between the Rio Colorado and the Columbia river, for one of the types imagined by certain novelists; he finds only a set of miserable beings whose physical faculties are developed by their mode of life, but who never exhibit a ray of true intelligence.

This Tchinouk, though chief of his tribe, was no exception to this rule. He appeared at one minute disposed to be angry, at least I fancied so, and then, apparently altering his mind, he came and welcomed me in a language composed of a few words of English, a few of French, and a great many of Tchinouk; then he offered me his hand, which I touched somewhat reluctantly, and returned slowly with us towards the place where we had left the stag. As we followed him, Bill told me what had passed between them. Bob at first had been furious, being deceived by the story of the Indian we had seen in the morning, who had hurried back to the village with the information that we had fired twice on him, and that he had only escaped through badly wounding one of us. But the chief was soon disabused of this idea, and in presence of the venison, the result of my shot, his intentions with regard to us were quickly modified, and he soon became most anxious to show us hospitality. In consequence of this, our game was soon placed on the Indian's back, and he, bending a little beneath the weight, led the way to his encampment, we following, with the certainty now of being received in a friendly manner.

Conducted by him, we followed the course of the river, over ground much resembling that we had left—that is to say, a little swampy, and overgrown with tall grass, diversified occasionally by bushes and tall trees; but at the end of a quarter of an hour's walking, the vegetation disappeared all at once, and we came to a chain of rocks barren of verdure, which barred our progress. The aspect of the country had changed suddenly and entirely, like a scene at a theatre; just before the river had run quietly between level banks like a prairie, and now it was lost to sight behind piled-up rocks, among which its waters tumbled and rushed in noisy confusion. We were at a rapid, and not far off, Bill informed me, the Indians we were on the road to see caught immense numbers of salmon, which swarm in all the rivers of their country.

Leaving Bill and the Tchinouk to follow a path badly cut out of the rocks, I clambered up, not without some trouble, to the crest of a rocky chain, from which I looked down, down an immense number of feet, at a strange spectacle. The course of the river, narrowed for a time at the bottom of a gorge, suddenly finding itself at liberty, spread itself out in one large sheet, in the middle of which appeared the tops of a number of black rocks, which, from where I was, seemed completely separate from one another. Their dark colour brought them out in strong relief from the flashing silver of the different currents of water, which tumbled and broke themselves against the stones.

The complete picture, surrounded as it was by mountains and forests, would in itself have struck me forcibly, but one detail of it, which had escaped me at first, soon absorbed my attention.

Upon these rocks, emerging from the middle of the river, I could distinguish living beings, which I soon made out to be men. They were the Flatheads, engaged in their favourite occupation, that of salmon fishing. All around the rocks on which they were grouped the river appeared to be deep, the current was strong and rapid, and the surface of the water near them was flecked with foam. It seemed impossible that the men could have swum to the places where I saw them; and yet I could not make out a sign of a boat anywhere near them or on the shore. The difficulty of resolving this question puzzled me so much, that I did not at first hear the voice of Bill Watson, who had come in search of me.

"Hallo, what are you doing there?" he called out, as he scrambled up to my side. "Come along down, and you shall have a closer view of the salmon fishing."

"That's what I want to do; but first tell me however the savages manage to get on to those rocks? I can't make it out. They don't seem to have any canoes."

"The fact is, it isn't half such a difficult matter as it looks. The bed of the river, which is rather deep, is encumbered with masses of rock, covered in some places with three or four feet of water. The Indians know exactly the positions of these, and spring from one to another, till they reach those you see. Yet sometimes a false step gives them a rather unpleasant bath, for the water of all these rivers is cold as ice. Now, shall we go down? Bob is at the village, and expects us. After we have had something to eat, we will come and have a look at this from a different level."

We were soon in the Indian village, and Bob, followed by two old men of the tribe, entered it in advance of us.

This encampment of the Tchinouks did not give me a very good opinion of their architectural capabilities. It looked very much like a circle of large molehills, each big enough to hold five or six persons. In the midst were old men, children and squaws, which latter, young or old, are the most ugly creatures it is possible to imagine. The spectacle not presenting the charm of novelty to me, for I had many times before seen much the same kind of thing, I was soon tired of it, and proposed that we should go and look at the fishing. Bill agreeing,

we set off for the river, when an old woman approached me resolutely, and pointing at my gun, which I held carelessly in my hand, began to apostrophize me in an unknown tongue. Certainly, without Bill I should never have found out what she meant; but he soon opened my eyes to the fact that she was reproaching me with carrying my gun loaded and cocked, when I was among friends.

I hastened to satisfy her by discharging its contents, for which she rewarded me by a fearful grimace, which I suppose was meant for a smile.

As we continued our way, my companion remarked—

"You see it is as I have told you, Jack. With Indians, you must show absolute confidence in them, the while you keep a sharp look-out at everything they do."

At this instant Bob rejoined us, when Bill informed him that we wanted to see the fishing, and to buy a salmon for our breakfast. However, he would not hear of our buying it, but assured us that in return for our present of game we might have as much fish as ever we pleased.

When we reached the place where I had seen them, the Indians had returned to the shore, and were preparing their captures for conveyance to a European establishment twenty miles off. Their preparations completed, they departed without taking the slightest notice of us.

The chief singled out one of them who had a magnificent salmon of seven or eight pounds, and, depriving him of it unceremoniously, presented it to us. We then returned to the village, where I expected there would be preparations for giving us something to eat.

Before the hut of the chief, two squaws were grilling over some coals pieces of the deer which I had killed, at the same time overlooking the cooking of loaves made of sweet acorns, crushed and mixed with a little ground maize and a great deal of cinder.

Too often already had I found myself under the dire necessity of tasting the culinary productions of the Indian ladies, not to be aware of their merit and doubtful cleanliness. So to-day I thought it best to cook my own dinner, which consisted of a slice of venison, some fresh salmon, and a few dry biscuits which I had with me. Bill followed my example.

While eating, we decided not to stop there any longer, the Tchinouk village presenting nothing new or interesting to us; so we left them as soon as we had finished our repast, and directed our course, like that of the river we followed, to the great Pacific Ocean.

LORD BEACONSFIELD has summed up his view of human existence in the phrase, more epigrammatic than a Welsh triad, that youth is a blunder, manhood a struggle, and old age a regret.

"I BELIEVE that mine will be the fate of Abel," said a devoted wife to her husband one day. "How so?" inquired the husband. "Because Abel was killed by a club, and your club will kill me if you continue to go to it every night."

Under the Yellow Flag.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER VI.

I SPENT much of my time on deck at this period, both by day and night, keeping up as well as I could the semblance of being at ease; but I believe that there were many on board that ship who read my feelings only too plainly. I did not believe that Eve had made a confidante of Mrs. Black, but I received more than one reproachful glance from the motherly little body; and, in spite of my misery, it was with something like a feeling of satisfaction that I saw how constantly my pale-faced little wife was at her side. Frequently of a night I would sit out the watches with the men, or, leaning over the side, gaze down at the rushing water, wishing at times that all were finished, and the power to brood over and muse on my misery at an end.

At times like this, I used occasionally to encounter a softly-gliding figure, making its way beneath the shadow of the bulwarks, or climbing into the chains; but I was so lost to everything but my own troubles that all passed unheeded.

It was one bright, clear morning again that, as I was standing by the davits, I saw Captain Black lifting a tarpaulin, and looking curiously into one of the cutters.

"Just look here, Thomas. What does this mean?" he exclaimed to the first mate.

And together they examined the boat, which was found to contain quite a store of provisions and water, besides a fair supply of blankets, and necessities for easing the tedium of a long boat voyage.

The captain hastily drew the tarpaulin back in its place, and glanced round the deck. There was no one in sight but the man at the wheel.

"There's some trick here," said the captain. "Just go and take the wheel five minutes, Thomas, and send Timkin here. I think we can trust him."

"Aye, with anything," said the mate. "But what are you going to do?"

"Do? Why keep quiet, and find out, by watching, what it means. Of course we can trust you, Mr. Leslie?"

I nodded, for I could not trust myself to speak. My heart was beating tumultuously, leaping as it were, and I felt first choked, then sick; for all things seemed to fit together so. What did it mean? Had I not dozens of times lately seen Graham leaning against that boat? And what could the storage mean but flight? And flight alone? How my heart beat and throbbed, as I called myself fool! ass! idiot! and answered that question, determining, too, that I would help to keep that watch.

"He will wait till we are somewhere approaching land," I thought.

And then—then I thought of my pistols, and shivered.

Meanwhile the mate had gone to the wheel, and Timkin, the huge sailor, came slowly rolling up, pulling his forelock first to his officer and then to me.

"Look here, Timkin," said the captain; "you're a man that I don't put the slightest trust in, though we've sailed together ten years."

"Leven," growled Timkin, expostulatingly.

"Well, eleven, then; but I don't trust you a bit."

"Course you don't. Why should you?" said the sailor.

"Now, just look here. I was coming past that cutter, and caught sight of a hammock-string hanging under the tarpaulin; so of course I lifted it up, and—look here!"

He raised the corner; the sailor peered in; then the tarpaulin was replaced, while, slapping his thigh, Timkin looked at me, then at the captain, whistled loudly, and exclaimed—

"I'm blest!"

"Come this way, now," said the captain, turning aft; and I followed them. "The men forward won't notice us now. Well, look here, Timkin," he continued; "of course I don't want to find out who stuck all that prog and those stores there."

"Good!" said the sailor.

"So the best plan will be for you to open your mouth, and go and tell every man in the ship that you've seen me and Mr. Thomas looking at them."

"No, it won't," said the man, grinning; "but I sha'n't split. Wondered what you'd found, though. Say, you know, it wouldn't be that fair chap, Master Grum, would it?"

"Mr. Graham, the passenger? Of course it would—sure to be," exclaimed the captain. "He's just the man who would want them, isn't he? There, be off back to the wheel, you great chuckle-headed oaf, and don't talk stuff."

"Don't care; he's always smoking and hanging about there—leastwise very often."

"They spent so much in building that great carcass, Mr. Leslie, that there was nothing left to buy brains with," said the captain, as Timkin went off growling. "That is, you know, I mean the reverse. He's all brains; and if you take him into your confidence, he's as close as an oyster. You understand what I mean?"

Had my thoughts been less occupied, I might have replied that I should be puzzled to do so; but I merely nodded, and then listened to the plans made between captain and mate.

"Well," said the mate, after some discussion, "it seems to me that all we have to do is to keep a bright look-out. What it means is plain enough. Some of the fellows intend to be off first opportunity, and if we are caught weak-handed in a storm, what do they care?"

"Now, then, what's the matter forward there?" exclaimed the captain, as a loud, angry outcry arose, and then the sound of a struggle.

"They're teasing that Chinaman. What a pity it is to have such fellows on board; they're always in hot water."

"Well, well, we must have enough hands of one sort or another to take a pull at a rope; and when you can't get Englishmen, what are you to do?"

On going forward, the cause of the disturbance was plain enough—two men were holding Kwi Tse, who had just been disarmed, but still struggled furiously.

"Now, look here," exclaimed the mate; "this sort of thing won't do. The next man who interferes

with the Chinaman will find himself in hot water. I'm not going to have my ship—"

"Good!" said Captain Black.

"Our ship," continued the mate, "turned into a bear garden, because you fellows get skylarking. Once for all, men, you must stop it. Here, you, Kwi Tse, pick up your knife, and carry it in your pocket, and—"

"Too good, men—I mean too bad," exclaimed the captain, angrily, as he stooped to pick up something off the deck. "There, you needn't laugh, men; I shouldn't wonder if he remembers some of you for this. Here, Chinaman, lay hold. It will soon grow again."

In spite of the presence of their officers, the men roared with laughter as Kwi Tse took the tail from the captain's hands, rolled it up, and then carefully put it in his pocket. For some wit of the crew had evidently thought it a capital joke to cut off the tail, while the man was plunged in his opium stupor; and then, grinding his teeth, the Chinaman went below, probably to console himself with more opium.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT night I watched long and patiently, but without avail—no one approached the boat; and the next night was equally uneventful. Had I been the only watcher, I should have thought it possible that I might have missed seeing any one who came; but on questioning Timkin I found that his vigil had been attended with precisely the same result.

The weather was still calm and beautiful, the vessel speeding on with favourable winds, and the prospect fair of our having a rapid passage to the old country. But save that it would rid me of the presence of Paul Graham, I felt no wish for our journey to be ended; for the aim seemed to have been taken from my life, and all the future to be one dreary blank.

I was lying wakeful one morning, just before dawn, having just turned in after being on deck all night, when I seemed to hear a low, grating noise below me—grate, grate, tear, tear—as of something working away at a bit of wood. It was kept up for quite an hour, I listening the while; then it ceased, to be succeeded by a soft, trickling noise, as if some barrel had been bored, and the liquid were escaping.

I was too worn out, though, to pay much heed to the sounds; and soon after I dropped asleep, not to wake till some hours had elapsed, when, going on deck, I found that, though matters were being taken very quietly, something was evidently wrong. The captain was talking earnestly to Mr. Thomas; and soon after, one of the pumps was set to work, and began pouring a stream of water into the scuppers.

I felt so careless, that I refrained from speaking; but I heard several questions asked of mate and sailors, and it was soon known throughout the ship that she had sprung a leak, and that it would be necessary to keep one pump going to keep down the water.

Towards night, though, the pump gave tokens of having mastered; but next morning it was again set to work, and at night, so far from having got

the upper hand, it was found necessary to man another; while, when the next day came, men's faces wore a gloomy aspect, for it was whispered that matters were growing worse, the water had seemed to come in faster each night, and that it would take all our energy to keep the vessel afloat, for she had sprung a dangerous leak.

The mention of the word danger seemed to rouse me from my apathy; for let my feelings be what they would, I felt that I must try and save Eve, should matters come to the worst. For a little reflection told me that if the water went on increasing as it had done during the last eight and forty hours, far away from land as we were, our only hope would lie in the boats.

There was but little said by Captain Black, but his anxiety showed in his lined face; and, in spite of my own trouble, I could not help admiring his energy and perseverance. Endless efforts were made to discover the leak, but only in one instance with success, when the mate told me that, by some extraordinary carelessness on the part of the builders, a trenail had been left out, and the water had come in slowly through the augur-hole.

"But we stopped it, sir, and if there are no more such holes, I dare say we shall be all right. The pumps will soon get all that water out of the hold. Bad job, though, for the tea."

It seemed, though, that there were more holes; for the water still rose hour by hour, slowly, but surely; and Mr. Stayman shook his head ominously at me as he passed by my side.

"I am afraid there are a good many trenails out, Mr. Leslie," he said. "It looks most suspicious to me."

"Suspicious! Why suspicious?" I said, anxiously; for I was ready to snatch at any doubt just then.

"Shipwrights don't leave holes in ships' sides when they overhaul a vessel after a long voyage. They stop leaks—don't make them."

"What do you think, then?" I exclaimed.

"I think I shall keep my thoughts to myself, and avoid all chance of being charged with libel. But if I were you, I fancy that I should prepare for the worst."

What did it all mean? Was there some conspiracy on board to sink the ship? I could not separate one thought from another. It was evident that the ship was in a sinking state, but whom could it profit? Then the recollection of the well-stored boat flashed across my mind; and I leaned against the bulwark, lost in surmises, and vainly endeavouring to piece the fragments and the suspicions which I held together.

That we were in danger was evident from the serious action taken by those on board; for, suddenly springing into activity, after long hours of patient thoughtfulness, the captain said a few words to the mate, then the vessel's course was suddenly altered, and, as it appeared to me, we began to slowly wend our way back. Then preparations were made for amply storing the boats and getting them ready for immediate service. But no sooner had a party of men been told off for duty, than those who were busy at the pumps immediately left them, a rush was made to the nearest boat, stores were hastily

thrown in, and preparations made for instant departure.

The captain and mate strove manfully to keep up the discipline of the ship, but in vain. There was a short struggle; and then the men, who seemed to have been seized by a panic, had the mastery.

"For God's sake, men," exclaimed Captain Black, "keep to your duty, and all will go wrong. No, confound it, no—I mean right. She'll float yet for days; and, if you stick to her, I promise you, you shall all go to the bottom."

A burst of derisive cheers greeted this speech.

"Avast there, will you!" shouted a stentorian voice—that of Timkin. "You know what he means."

"What a fool I am!" groaned the captain; then aloud—"Back to the pumps, men, and we'll run for one of the nearest islands. There's no real danger yet; I only wished to be ready for the worst."

A burst of groans and hootings here ensued, and from the midst of the men a voice shouted—

"She's been scuttled. It's an insurance dodge!"

In the heat of the moment, upon hearing that the men shared the suspicions that had obtained a footing in his own breast, Captain Black shouted, angrily—

"Yes; and who did it?"

"Ask the skipper," shouted the same voice.

And then followed a chorus of groans, and a cheer or two from the men.

"It's of no use; they've gone mad, Black," said Mr. Thomas, the mate. "She's scuttled sure enough, and if I knew the hand that had done it—"

He did not finish; but his teeth grated together as he looked from face to face, as if in search of some one upon whom to plant his suspicions.

"Mad, indeed!" exclaimed the captain; "but do the scoundrels think I've had a hand in it?"

"Yes, yes," chorused a score of voices.

And, with a look of perplexity and horror upon his face, the captain turned round to where the passengers were gathered together in a knot; but no one spoke, and their gloomy looks seemed to say that they believed the charge.

Suddenly a huge form was seen to rear itself upon the capstan, and swing its arms about for a few moments, as a burst of cheers rang out from the men.

"Looky here, maties," growled a voice, apparently coming from the figure, for its back was turned to the passengers—"looky here, I've sailed 'leven year along o' Capen Black, and he never scuttled no ships afore now; and whosoever says as he scuttled this here, I, Timothy Barker, as sarved my time in a Yarmouth trawler, says it's a d—d lie."

"Well done, Timkin!" shouted a derisive voice.

And then the big fellow got slowly down, went to the side, and spat, and then shuffled round to the back of the passengers, followed by about ten more of the crew, heedless of the groans of their companions, some thirty strong.

"Thank God for that!" muttered the captain, piously. "I don't see, gentlemen," he said, turning to the passengers, "that it is my duty to risk bloodshed in a time like this, by trying to force these

mutineers—I can call them nothing else—back to their duty. They prefer trusting to the boats; let them, but we will reserve a couple for ourselves. You have trusted yourselves to me so far, and, in spite of your suspicions, I can say before God that I have done my duty by you, and I will continue to do so to the end. It is no use to attempt to deny that the ship has been scuttled; but by whose hand, as God is my witness, I do not know, neither do I suspect any one. But that there has been a plot in hatching is plain enough, by the secret manner in which the first cutter has been kept ready stored."

My eyes involuntarily sought those of Paul Graham at this moment, to find that his were curiously fixed upon mine.

"If those fellows choose to go, I shall not try to stay them; while as for you, gentlemen, and you my good fellows, who have come on our side, trust to me, and I'll do my best to save all. My plan is this—to have the boats all ready, and keep to the ship till the last moment. Help me to the full extent of your power, and we may yet save her; but if not, I am, as you see, still keeping a means open for escape."

A burst of cheers followed this speech, which seemed to have some little effect upon the other men, but very little; for, busying themselves actively for about an hour, they launched a couple of boats, stowed them well, and then, without a word, put off.

"Stop, there!" shouted the captain, springing on to the taffrail.

"What for?" was the gruff response.

"Which way do you mean to steer?"

"That's our business," growled one of the sailors.

"South-east by east will bring you to the nearest land," he said.

And a voice from the boat cried out—

"Thanky, captain."

The next moment there was a rush on deck, and Kwi Tse, looking scared and wild, came up from the forecastle, darted to the side, and, seeing the boats pushed off to some distance, without a moment's hesitation leaped overboard, and began to swim strongly for the hindmost. But it soon became evident that the men, urged by the selfishness begotten of great danger, were determined not to add to their complement, and they shouted to the Chinaman to return; when, seeing that he took no heed of their cries, they began to beat the water with boat-hook and oar in so fierce a manner that the poor wretch was at last obliged to turn back, and swim towards the side of the vessel.

It was plainly to be seen, though, that slow as was the ship's progress, the Chinaman would never be able to overtake it; when, giving his orders promptly, Captain Black had the well-stored cutter manned and lowered, and with the third mate in command, it was rowed off to pick up the struggling man.

We watched the boat's progress with some interest, saw the big form of Timkin rise up, lean over, and apparently without any effort haul in the swimmer, who crouched down for a few moments; but only to rise up, and begin gesticulating, pointing first to the other boats, then to the ship, when the

men ceased rowing, and the mate in the stern sheets started up.

"We are getting on beautifully, Thomas," said the captain, coolly. "They mean to go off in that boat. It almost seems as if that rascal was inciting them to follow the other. Look at that!"

The captain's adjuration was needless; for at that moment we all saw the big sailor seize the Chinaman, and in an instant haul him over the side, while the next moment he seated his huge form in its place, and began to row, shouting to the others to give way, even going so far as to lift his oar, he being in the bows, and bring it smartly down upon one refractory man's head.

Five minutes after, they were alongside, the mate having thrown a rope to Kwi Tse, who slowly followed the men up the ladder.

"What did he want to get the men to mutiny for, then?" growled Timkin, upon the captain asking him for an explanation of his conduct. "He told 'em, in his savage way, what they already knew—that the ship was sinking, and wanted 'em to follow the other boats."

"Keep a sharp look-out, gentlemen all," said Captain Black; "and such of you as have arms had better not mount them; for men in times of peril are apt, like that highly civilized member of society, to forget their fellows in their efforts for self-preservation."

A Rogue Elephant.

WHAT a pleasant time it was when, having rapidly reached the camp which had been found at some lovely spot like Minery Lake, one found a sheltered little bathing place erected, and some chatties of icy-cold water, arranged for a refreshing bath, after a hot ride of many miles! A well-cooked dinner would soon afterwards be served, with every convenience of civilized life, and our beds stood at the sides of the tent, with the necessary mosquito curtains, promising a sound night's rest in despite of those irritating pests. And when the trackers were called up, and reports of several herds gave promise of sport for the next day, how we used to enjoy that glass of whisky toddy, which kept off fever, and lent enchantment to the rosy visions of prospective success!

Minery Lake at the right season was a beautiful spot. More than twenty miles in circumference, and surrounded by fine high but rather thick forest, there was a broad belt of green sward reaching from the jungle to the edge of the water. And what a sight might sometimes be seen on this lawn-like strip of grass! The lovely spotted deer in large herds fed on the fresh young herb; wild buffaloes, showing nothing but their noses and their horns, revelled in the quiet water, and every now and then a lordly elephant would stand in the shallow lake, and spout a sheet of cool spray over his heated and ponderous body.

Our tents were pitched in a small open grove of high forest trees, which just concealed them from the animals that came down to drink in the lake, but gave us a good view without risk of disturbing them.

Suddenly an exclamation of "Arlia," from one of the servants, attracted our attention. Jumping up, we ran out of the tent; and there, sure enough, about two miles from us, stood a large single elephant, splashing in the water. In ten minutes the gun-bearers were ready, the guns carefully loaded, and, creeping through the edge of the jungle, we were making our way towards the giant of the forest.

We knew that a notorious rogue elephant of very large size frequented this end of the lake. The villagers told terrible stories of the cunning and malevolent beast, and declared that he would lie in wait for unsuspecting girls as they went down to the lake to wash their clothes or bathe, and had often crushed them spitefully to death beneath his ponderous feet. But the elephant before us, though large, was not of unusual height; and we scarcely thought it could be the dreaded beast that we longed so much to come across.

Before we could reach the spot he had finished his bath; and although quite undisturbed, began slowly to retire towards the jungle. Pushing rapidly on until we arrived at the spot where he had entered the forest, we could tell by the snapping of the boughs that he was not far distant. We crept stealthily on his track, not disturbing a twig unnecessarily; but there was scarcely a breath of wind, and we feared he would soon scent us. The jungle grew thicker and thicker; and as the cracking of the branches did not recede, we knew that he had halted, and was probably fanning himself from the flies, which appear to trouble these huge beasts as much as they annoy the human species.

We were now drawing very near; but the under-wood had become so dense that we could only see a few yards in advance. Suddenly there was a deep, burring sound, like the very low rumble of distant thunder, and then all was as still as death. We knew that he had winded us; and as rogues will sometimes remain perfectly quiet, preparatory to a charge, we crept on foot by foot, expecting each moment to hear the shrill trumpet, and to see him come crashing down upon us. But he never moved.

Soon, as if seen through a veil, so hidden was he by the thick growth of tropical vegetation, we could just discern his dim outline; at that moment, some thick monkey ropes lay across our path.

"We cannot get nearer," whispered E.; "take the shot."

I knew how uncertain it was to attempt to fire through such a mass of twigs and branches; but to try and creep under the monkey ropes, with the rogue waiting only a few yards off, would have been madness, so, taking a steady aim, I fired. He reeled for a moment, then quickly recovered, and dashed off through the jungle, we scrambling after him, but without having the slightest chance in the race, through the tangled mass of undergrowth. We heard him crashing away in the distance, and soon gave up the chase, and, lamenting our bad luck in finding him in such awkward ground, began to make our way back to the tents.

We had just reached the edge of the jungle, and were about to emerge on to the broad green sward that skirted the lake, when we both uttered a sudden ejaculation, and looked curiously at each other.

There, close to the water's edge, right between us and the camp, and not five hundred yards distant, stood a gigantic rogue elephant.

From his general appearance we recognized at once the description given by the villagers of their dreaded enemy. He certainly was a vicious-looking animal, and he was calmly drinking and spouting water through his trunk, although we had fired a shot not half a mile away. We held a council of war, for the position was difficult. A light breeze had sprung up, and if we advanced directly upon him the wind would be favourable for us; but the ground we had to traverse was as smooth as a lawn, and there was not a stone or a bush that would give the slightest concealment.

There was only one chance: the afternoon's sun was shining straight in his eyes as he turned towards us, and elephants do not see well under these conditions. But we knew that if we took our gun-bearers with us, so large a party must attract his attention, so we determined to go alone. They were not sorry when they received orders to remain behind, for to march straight up to a determined and desperate rogue on perfectly open ground like this was a very serious and hazardous business.

E. and I knew full well that we were going to engage in a fight to the death on one side or the other, and we looked carefully to the guns, and saw that everything was all right. It was E.'s shot; he had a heavy rifle, I a double smooth-bore, but a tried and trusty weapon, carrying a very large charge.

All being ready, we quietly emerged from the jungle, crouching as if deer-stalking, and, keeping one close behind the other, we crept stealthily forward. The rogue was still enjoying his bath and tearing up weeds from the bottom of the lake, with which he swished off the troublesome flies. After a time, he turned away from us and stood facing the camp.

Making the most of the opportunity, we pushed quickly on. We were now within a hundred yards of him, and he was still utterly unconscious of our presence, for we advanced quite silently over the soft green turf. It was an exciting moment, and our hearts thumped so that one almost thought the elephant must hear them. On, on we went, until we were within about twenty yards, and the enormous brute was still flapping off the flies from his ponderous sides, and as unconcerned as ever. We now came to the end of the grass, and a sort of shingly beach fringed the edge of the water. Here our steps were more audible, and we had not advanced three paces over this ground, when, with a roar like thunder, the beast wheeled suddenly round, and stood for a moment facing us, like a statue.

It was a magnificent sight. He seemed utterly transformed, as, with ears cocked, his trunk extended towards us, and his small eyes flashing fire, he looked the incarnation of furious rage. In another instant he dashed straight at us.

"Fire before he raises his trunk," I cried to E.

And, springing forward to windward so as to be clear of the smoke when he fired, I covered the savage beast myself in case of accidents. At that moment E.'s rifle rang out, and echoed loudly round the shores of the lake. There was no occasion for

my shot. The huge beast, that a second before had looked the embodiment of grand and vicious power, sank slowly down, and, with his legs in front of him, and his tusks buried deep in the gravelly beach, lay stone dead. With a shout of triumph, E. deprived him of the usual trophy—the tail—and the gun-bearers soon came up, grinning with delight.

There was great rejoicing in the village that night over the death of their dreaded foe; and E. and I, if I remember rightly, drank an extra glass of whisky toddy in honour of our victory over the old rogue elephant.

The Great American Falls.

THE relic-hunters are a feature of Niagara. In addition to the numerous Indian stores in the village, one meets a blind woman, a lame man, or a crippled child on every corner and every turn. I shook them all off except a one-eyed man with a scar on his nose. He made up his mind that I was his meat, and he headed me off from the Goat Island bridge, and asked—

"Any specimens?"

"No, sir."

"Any rock ornaments?"

"No, sir."

"Any toy canoes?"

"No, sir."

"Any bullets from the battle-field of Lundy's Lane?"

"No, sir."

"Any beadwork?"

"No, sir."

"Any pea-shooters for the children?"

"No, sir."

"Any Indian pipes?"

"No, sir."

"Any canes?"

"No, sir."

I worked past him on the bridge; and while I was viewing the rapids he came up and asked—

"Any tobacco-pouches?"

"No, sir."

"Won't you please buy something?" he entreated, scratching the scar on his nose.

"Not a pennyworth, sir! I came here to view the grandeur of Niagara, to feel awed and puzzled, to drink in all that's solemn and magnificent in the cataract—and if you follow me on that island I'll murder you!"

I was walking down the island, when I heard a hard breathing behind, and lo! there was that one-eyed man again.

"Want to buy any relics?" he asked, as he came up.

"No, sir."

"Want to buy any battles from the bullet-field of Lundy's Lane?"

"No, sir."

"Want to buy any—"

It was my first murder, and it makes me shudder to think of it. It is no trifling thing to brain a one-eyed man with a scar on his nose and throw his body over a cliff, and I'm sorry I did it. I see now that it was my duty to have permitted him to bore me to death.

The Egotist's Note-book.

THE Bishop of Manchester, at the opening of the services at Owen's College, argued against Professor Tyndall's theory of evolution, and contended that the more they went back the more it seemed that the theory of evolution not only presupposed and postulated an intelligent Creator, but also presupposed and postulated the actual interfering presence of a personal Creator at every stage of its operation. Which is very pretty and very learned; but will the Bishop of Manchester kindly presuppose and postulate that we ordinary mortals don't know what he means?

The Lord Mayor, who presided the other day at the election of an alderman, in opening the proceedings expressed his determination not to permit the state of things that existed at the last wardmote, after which he was compelled to keep his room for two days, in consequence of gravel having been thrown into his eyes. This last proceeding was decidedly too bad. In some cases, perhaps, it is allowable to throw dust in a person's eyes. But gravel! Fie, citizens of Chepe, fie! Better keep the gravel to benefit the horses, by throwing it on the asphalte of your slipper side.

One of the prettiest little presents I have lately seen for a lady is one of Harper's Prize Needle-cases—specimens of which have been sent for consideration. All that art and good taste could accomplish has been done; and, in addition to those highly satisfactory little pieces of steel utility, there are other tiny mysteries used in feminine work; and, what is more, a housewife, tablet and style for making memoranda. It is a very ingenious little combination.

It is a pleasure to endorse the following, which appeared in the *Daily News*, and is illustrated by the cartoon of an artist:—

"SIR—Your correspondent in his description of the scene in court at the conclusion of the recent trial makes, no doubt in the hurry of writing, one error. He says 'the ladies on the bench and in the body of the court, who had all day waited for the end without any relief except that afforded by staring persistently at the prisoners through opera glasses and lorgnettes,' &c. Of late years the term 'lady' has been widely stretched, and is applied indiscriminately to almost all women, whatever may be their rank, birth, breeding, or fortune. But it has not yet lost all significance; and those who claim that title are still expected to possess—or at least to pretend to possess—some little of the gentleness of womanhood; some little of that delicacy of mind which shrinks from causing unnecessary pain or offence to others. Prostituted as the word has become, it is still happily inapplicable to any member of that flaunting female crowd who, opera glass or lorgnette in hand, ogled persistently the prisoners at the bar during their hours of intolerable agony. However, with persons of this kind, nothing that could be said would be of the least avail; but surely there must be some official connected with the court whose duty it is to see that

something is done to prevent a court of justice from being turned into a theatre for the shameless exhibition of vulgar depravity."

Mr. Charles P. O'Connor, one of our best singers of Ireland's songs, has another work in the press, entitled "Love hath Victory; and other Poems." The book is to contain a memoir of the author and a portrait by Miss Ellen Edwards.

Mr. Alfred Stone must have had a heart of stone, for he has been sentenced to six months' labour for assaulting his wife, and two months' for cruelly torturing what the reporter calls a "Poll-parrot." Now, with all due respect to the able reporter of police-court news, I think it would be better to write of this bird as a parrot only, without the Poll, especially as it is my firm belief that the specimens brought over and taught to talk are the male birds. If, however, he must add to the bird's natural history-name, why not say a Tom-parrot?

What is the explanation of these constant applications every week to the police magistrates for aid to find missing relatives? Old and young of both sexes are disappearing, and leaving no trace. Is it a case of Burke and Hare redivivus?

The baby Aquarium whale,
The baby Aquarium whale,
It came to Old England through storm and through gale,
Objected to live in a fresh-water pail,
So it shook its head sadly, and wagged its tail;
Just fiddled its fins, and began to turn pale;
Then died on its side, and was very soon stale.
And Lee, christened Henry, autopsied that whale—
The baby Aquarium whale.

Talk of aquaria, Mr. F. F. F. (Fisherman Francis Francis) has been writing to complain that some one, probably a naughty boy, stole some baby turtles (why baby?) out of a tank, and transplanted one of the electrical eels from its own home into the alligator pond. I sincerely hope that the alligator will not be such a fool as to swallow it. Only fancy! An electrical eel swallowed whole. Oh, colic! The consequence would be shocking.

This is nice. The French cabman may take as many small-pox patients as he can get. The more the better, indeed; for he generally charges double fare for the risk. A few days ago one of these conscientious gentlemen was invited to take a small-pox patient to the hospital. He merely observed that "they must make haste, as he was engaged to carry a wedding party to church in an hour or two, and had little time to spare."

With reference to a proposition to entrust children of eight to twelve years of age with the task of distributing this deadly "vermin killer" over potato plants in danger from the Colorado beetle, a correspondent of the *Agricultural Gazette* writes:—"Paris green is nothing more or less than arsenite of copper, and it contains, in round numbers, arsenious acid equivalent to about 40 per cent. of white arsenic, and about 50 per cent. of copper. Experiments have

shown that potatoes grown in earth impregnated with arsenious compounds are quite free from arsenic—that is to say, that they don't absorb any of the poison. Traces might certainly adhere to their jackets, but if washed or scraped with ordinary care, the consumer need have no apprehensions as to their wholesomeness. If our transatlantic friend should, after all, honour us with the invasion for which our mighty preparations have been so long afoot, we need not fear the Paris green, if properly used. But we must not lose sight of the fact that this useful compound, in careless or mischievous hands, is as fatal to human as to entomological life, and that its wholesale distribution among farm labourers is therefore fraught with a heavy responsibility. Were I to entrust its use, like the Illinois farmer, to children of eight years of age, I should do so with a strong anticipation of a coroner's inquest, and of a severe reprimand for culpable carelessness, differing in no very wide sense from the crime of manslaughter."

Mr. O'Connor, of the British Legation in Brazil, calls attention, in a recent official report, to *stervamaté*, an article largely cultivated in the province of Parana, and exported to neighbouring South American countries, but hitherto not on the list of exports to European markets, though it would, he has no doubt, be very acceptable, as it is pronounced by those who have tried it a capital substitute for our far more expensive and too often adulterated tea and coffee. He says it is more fortifying and alimentary, and much more wholesome, and can be sold at a price so moderate as to place it within the reach of all classes. He states that the Minister of Agriculture has appropriated a small sum for the purpose of making this excellent plant known in Europe. An Irish sailor, who had tasted it, said it was "Like mate and drink too, matey!"

Some wise reporter heads a paragraph, "The Evil Effects of Bad Literature," and goes on to describe how an errand boy absconded with money, and had a cheap volume of "The King's Own" in his pocket. Moreover, his father stated the boy had been well brought up, but had lately taken to reading literature of the Jack Sheppard class. Poor Captain Marryat! What would he have said could he have lived to hear his genial, hearty sea stories spoken of as "bad literature," and of the "Jack Sheppard class"? Why, there are fashionable novels written every day, with such an outrageously suggestive twang in their composition, that one of poor old Marryat's coarse-languaged, honest old stories, if placed among them on a shelf, would act like yeast, and leaven and elevate the lot, so foul are they by comparison.

Here is an advertisement from the *Daily News*:—

"M. C.—Rose leaves in abundance in store. Toby inquired for you this morning. No other letter, but this is from me.—Sept. 26th."

What does it mean? Ah, that's the secret. Ask Toby, the inquirer.

One of our county court judges is in the habit of constantly interrupting counsel. The other day a law-

yer, driven to desperation by his interruptions, said—"Your honour is a greater man than the Lord Chief Justice of England. He always understands me when I have done, but your honour sees my point before I begin."

There is a curious story told of a man who came on the field of battle. The Duke of Wellington remonstrated with him, and the gentleman replied that his Grace was in the same peril.

"Yes," said the duke, "but I am doing my duty."

It was just at this moment that a ball struck the unfortunate man dead.

There is a story in Japan of the extremest antiquity. It is that, for a long time in the world, there was no weapon that was not made of flint or stone. At last a sword was made of iron, and it was the maiden sword of this world. It fell into the hands of a young prince. This prince, feeling the greatness of such a treasure as the first iron sword, went forth to see what wrong he could right, what good he could do—went forth a sort of primitive Quixote, but in a more serious mood. He saw a cut stick on the river, and he travelled up the river; and there he found an old man and an old woman with a beautiful maiden sitting between them, and all three were weeping. The prince asked why they wept, and they said they had eight children, and there was in the neighbourhood a terrific monster with eight heads and eight tails. This monster would devastate the whole country unless every year one of their children was given him to devour. They had given seven daughters, and now they had brought the last. The monster was expected momentarily. The prince looked at his sword, but did not feel that it was equal to dealing with eight heads. So he hit upon the device of preparing hogsheds of wine. He had a park with eight gates, and in each of these gates he placed a hoghead of wine; and when the monster came eight heads appeared, and eight heads went into these barrels of wine. And they sipped the wine, and deeper and deeper they went down, until the eyes were not over the barrel, and in fact they became intoxicated. The result was that where their necks met in one, and in the body, the prince cut off all the heads at one blow, and saved the young lady.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyl-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEITHER Madeline nor Frank seemed particularly conversational, for there was a feeling of constraint, and but little was said, except when Frank made a forced attempt at saying something meant to be witty; and therefore it was a relief for them when Mrs. Elton did all she could to deserve her son's accusation.

"Now do eat, my dear," she exclaimed. "You are making a miserable tea. It was really very kind of you to come."

"There, do be quiet, mamma," said Frank; "you are trying all you can to spoil Miss Glebeley's meal. Since she has been kind enough to condescend to visit such common people again, don't keep casting her sin in her teeth."

"Frank!" exclaimed Madeline, in a tone of playful reproach.

"Frank!" exclaimed Mrs. Elton. "How can you talk so, when I'm sure no gentleman's son—"

"There, there," exclaimed Frank, rising. "I have only half finished my tea, and if there is any more such flattery-tinged language uttered in my presence, I shall gird up my loins and flee, and come back no more till night. Only think, Miss Glebeley, what a life for a man to lead when his very mother tries to ruin the moral tone of his composition by strengthening his self-esteem. Times are altered since we played together as children. Where I used to be scolded, now I'm flattered. It's perfectly shocking to one's sense of propriety."

"I really should go," said Madeline, laughingly.

"No, I'll not," said Frank, sitting down—"I'll stay out of spite. But I won't hear another word. Let's change the subject. I say, mamma, how do they make muffins? I mean, how do they put the holes in?"

Saying which, Frank handed the plate to Madeline, who shook her head at him and tried to frown, but failed signally; for, somehow or another, the frown became a deep smile.

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Elton, quite seriously, "I believe the holes come of— Get out! you're always getting in the cream. The flies are really such a nuisance that— Tchut! be off with you, do, fly. There, it's of no use crawling under the spoon; you must go. They are such a nuisance, that I shall be obliged to have one of those sticking blisters the men sell at Edgeton. I must have one or two, even if they are taken out of the room when Mr. E. comes in; for he has always hated them since he set his new white hat upon one last summer, and then wore it sticking on all the way to market, and did not find it out till a boy laughed at him. Dear me, how he did go on! But, cross as he was, I told him it was his own fault, for he had no business to have brought his hat farther than the passage when he came in, and—"

"But the muffins, mother mine," said Frank, laughing.

"There, you're laughing at me again, my dear, and I can't help it, so it's no use. But, to be sure, the muffins. Dear, dear, though, what have I been

doing? I've been pouring the cream into the sugar. But you won't mind, my dears, I dare say. Well, they mix flour, and milk, and yeast, and— But, stop, let me see; do they put in yeast, or don't they? I don't quite remember; but they have a flat iron and some rings, and stir it together, and bake them. What *is* he saying to make you laugh, Miss Glebeley? I'm sure he's whispering something disparaging; but I don't mind now, for I am pretty well used to his teasing, and I don't believe, after all, that he wanted to know anything about the muffins."

It was pleasant upon that sunny evening, sitting at the open window, with its screen of geraniums, and roses, and jasmine peering in from without. Sitting silently without wish or desire to speak—sitting thinking, surrounded by that soft medium which grows thinner as years glide by, but which in youth tinges all around with soft but glowing colours, making the simplest spot, the most ordinary building, wear a hue that renders it attractive. After long years, how changed! How vainly we seek again to view all things through that happy medium—that *couleur-de-rose*-tinging haze. Time seems to ripen the mental sight, so that we look upon things as they really are. Youth taught to magnify the bright and diminish the dull; but age shows all with the proper balance preserved. Fields, flowers, hedge and woodside, all seem to be changed; the flower appears to have lost its tint, and the attractiveness which rendered a pale primrose from a bank more to be desired than a rose has passed away. There was a certain bright romance which clothed all things then; and now only by night—in that short transition state before sleep quite takes possession of our senses—do we see mentally the scenes of the past as they once appeared. Then come again the softened strains of old airs, sweet, thrilling, and soul-stirring to a degree. Happy that man who, leaving the cares of the present, can fall back into the happiness of the past, even to the time when he learned that there was "nothing half so sweet in life as Love's young dream."

Ah! 'twas pleasant sitting by that open window listening to the "wash-wash, hurry-hurry" of the waters as they left the mill-wheel—sitting gazing out upon the smiling golden landscape, now glowing with tints that a Turner would hardly have dared to imitate for fear of the charge of exaggeration—sitting silently, thought wrapped in thought, and heart seeming to speak to heart from the eyes alone, as ever and anon they met.

It is questionable whether, in the correct and stereotyped form, Frank had ever told his love, or whether he had ever asked for a return. The late reserve on Madeline's part, however, had awakened the student to a true sense of his own feelings—to a knowledge of the ardent love which had been the growth of many years—green at first, and tender, but strengthening like a plant of ivy till it had bound him in its clinging embrace; while now, to his great joy, Frank felt that it held another in its toils; that from being playmates and confidants a warmer and holier feeling had sprung up—slowly, imperceptibly, but none the less firm and sure.

The sun fast sank towards his rest, and the shadows began to darken in the corners of that little

room. Eve's breath, moist, cool, and refreshing, as the light mists began to hover about the river, was wafted slowly and gently—wafted, burdened as it was with the scents of a thousand flowers, through the open window—a breath that in its soft, intoxicating perfume seemed to tell of love. The lark sang its last notes, and the thrush was pouring forth its evening song to the parting day, while the hum of the beetle and the distant lowing of the cattle formed a softened bass for Nature's sweet evening hymn. It seemed now that words would have been out of place, and indeed they were entirely wanting; but a sympathy existed which well filled the void, and was far more eloquent in its silence.

The last rays of the god of day must have rested awhile upon Madeline's cheek, for, dim as the room had grown, a bright flush was visible to Frank's loving gaze, as her unresisting hand lay clasped in his.

Still silence. No words. Only the communion of their hearts. Darker grew the shades of evening, and night was fast spreading her terror-inspiring wings over the face of earth. The evening sounds grew fainter and fainter, and died away; while from a dark cloud the summer lightning began to flicker and dart, showing the configuration of the vapour from which it played. Darker and darker still; and now, for the first time for many years, and as though to protect the fair girl by his side, did Frank's arm encircle her waist. Thus drawn towards him, timidly, half-resisting, but lovingly, the maiden's form was pressed to his breast, and her head rested upon his shoulder, while he could feel his cheeks fanned by her breath as the question now first asked received a reply—gently fanned as Madeline murmured the words—

"For ever!"

"You'd better shut the window, my dears, for it's growing damp; and if we send Miss Glebeley away with a bad cold, we shall not be allowed to have her here again."

And Mrs. Elton bustled into the room, hugging herself so that her heart should not burst with its dearest wish so gratified. She had come coughing and rustling her silk down the passage, but no one had heard her till she opened the door.

"There," she exclaimed, lighting the candles, "I've been so long showing that girl how to tie down the preserves. I didn't mean to stay, and I'm sure Miss Glebeley must think me very rude; but girls are so stupid now. They used to be of some use; but if they go on as they have done, getting worse and worse year after year, I quite pity the young married people who are to come."

Here Mrs. Elton stopped, and had a quiet chuckle to herself; thinking what a pungent shaft of witticism she had sent stinging at the young people.

"You see, my dear," she continued, "girls nowadays won't think—yes, draw the blind close, Frank, or the people can see quite plainly from out of the road—they will not think of what they are doing. I told that girl to pour out some brandy in a saucer, and I've been cutting out the round pieces of foolscap paper, dipping them in the saucer, and

showing her how to put them on the top of the jam, and then how to tie them down, just as I have done them every season for the last fifteen or twenty years. You know, Miss Glebeley, it's as fine raspberry jam as ever you saw, and fortunately, as I was doing it, I made my fingers just a little sticky, and of course put them in my mouth, when—only think—if it was not raspberry vinegar, for the stupid thing had filled the saucer out of the vinegar bottle instead of with brandy."

"And drunk the spirit, mamma?" said Frank.

"Nonsense, child, no," said Mrs. Elton. "Why, you know she won't even touch mead. But it was so provoking; and there I had to do all my work over again, for I had finished ever so many pots."

Now, all this was most dreadfully transparent of Mrs. Elton; but, then, elderly ladies are so fond of a little match-making. She liked Madeline Glebeley, as being the only girl she thought sufficiently good for her son, whom she considered to be far superior to Crichton the Admirable; while of course she would not have come back any sooner even if it had not been for the vinegar incident. And in all this she showed herself to be a most terrible old humbug—strong as the term may appear to apply to a middle-aged lady; but then there is no more suitable or expressive word of a refined character at the present moment in the writer's vocabulary, so it must stand.

Mrs. Elton reasoned with herself after this wise—

"I'm sure they don't want me there, so I'll leave them together for an hour. She's a sweet girl, and I suppose I must let matters take their course." A remark which was hardly fair, after the way in which mother had spoken to son but a short time before. "It quite makes me think of old times!" Here Mrs. Elton stopped, and let fall a great salt-water tear plump upon one of the jam pot drum-heads, and had to re-cover it with fresh paper. "I declare," she continued, "it makes one envious; but then it's of no use, for Mr. E. never was tender and gentle, and that sort of thing; and even if I were to be gentle and loving to him, or hint at anything of the sort, he would not know what it meant, but call me stupid and weak, and I suppose I am rather. But I declare, now I come to think of it, he has never sat with his arm round my waist but once since we were married."

However, the bustling duties of the preserving department put a stop to Mrs. Elton's train of thought, or doubtless it would have gone on without let or hindrance at express speed. But Mrs. Elton was not a model mother. As in the days of Noah, people marry and are given in marriage, and of course have to go through all the necessary preliminaries; but, as a general rule, suitors do not meet with such reprehensible parents as Mrs. Elton and the Reverend Charles Glebeley. For of course it was not right for Frank Henderson to be sitting alone with Madeline in the dusk of a summer's eve, and the straggling hairs of all the old scandal-mongers within a circuit of twenty miles would have risen with horror had they known it; and what would have happened could they have seen all that occurred, this chronicler knoweth not. For just at the duskiest time, when Nature was whispering so of

love in those fragrant breaths that came softly through the window, just then—

Shall I tell it? Shall I make known what every right-minded person must consider as shocking?

Just then Frank was trying in the dusk to gaze into Madeline's eyes for a confirmation of those words "for ever," when their lips met in the first long, clinging kiss of love—that kiss which is never kissed again; and then, trembling and blushing, Madeline had shrunk away, to hide her face in her hands, as Mrs. Elton came into the room.

Query—Did Mrs. Elton see?

CHAPTER XIV.—STRICTLY EDUCATIONAL.

WAVELEY National School, nine o'clock, and the children assembled. According to custom, Mr. Boreham had stumped up to his desk, carefully wiped his glasses, frowned silence, and prepared for the reading of the morning prayers, when the door opened, and the gaunt figure of the new curate entered.

He bowed slightly and condescendingly to the master, waved him from his place, and then, taking the vacant desk, prepared to read the prayers himself, much to the discomfiture of Timothy Boreham, who had always been accustomed to show off before his boys as master of his own school, and, like Dr. Busby, he would not have bowed to a king in the presence of his scholars, who looked upon him as a man far greater than the rector. But this seemed like an act of deposition to the master, who appeared very uncomfortable and rather out of place kneeling with the undamaged leg upon one of the forms. He had seen his visitor at church, and also at the schools on the previous Sunday, but then he came merely as a visitor; but now, upon seeing the quite-at-home manners of the curate, Mr. Boreham felt that to a certain extent he was to resign the seals of office into the stranger's hands; and after the reading of the prayers, followed him demurely amongst the rows of little upturned faces, as the Reverend Newman made a tour of the school-room.

"Oh, er-er, Mister—er-er," said the curate.

"Boreham, sir," said the master.

"Oh, er-er—Mr. Boreham, which is your first class?"

"That one, sir," said the master, pointing to a row of little hes and shes sitting upon a very low form, but whose short bare legs were dangling about some inches from the red-tiled floor, and whose average ages might have been four-and-a-half.

"Oh—er, tha-a-nk you," said the curate, approaching class one, just as a curly-headed imp was reaching behind his neighbour and lugging the hair of the next door but one; and then, conscience-stricken as he saw the tall figure in black approaching, he shrank back, with arm extended to ward off the expected cuff, half-whimpering, and exclaiming, as he pointed to another curly-headed urchin—

"Please, sir, it's him."

Just then a favour-seeker drew attention to a boy by pulling the curate's long skirt, and pointing out the delinquent's feet, which wore the appearance of having been blacked with whitewash.

"He've been tchortin's boots," said the tale-bearer.

One little morsel seemed to read punishment in the curate's stern features, for he began to rub his eyes with both fists preparatory to a howl; while another, with a thirst for knowledge that was not to be awed even by the presence of his master and a dignity of the Church, was studying the aspect of the school by hooking his hands upon the form, hanging head downwards, and gazing beneath the seat, thus gaining a view in reverse, without the aid of a concave mirror, but at the expense of a convexity upon his *os frontis*.

"Biddle!" cried Mr. Boreham, sternly.

"Bump!" said Biddle, loosing his hold, and coming down with his head in sharp contact with the floor, after which he yelled with dismay and pain.

"Oh, er-er! Did you say this was your first class, Mr. Borer?"

"Yes, sir," said the master, trying to pacify the injured Biddle, and at last compelled, out of self-defence, to send him into the lane to be walked up and down by an elder boy till the noise was abated. "Yes, sir. We always place them in the lowest class, and then let them work upwards to the seventh, which is the highest."

"Oh—er! allow me, Mr. Borely; not at all a good plan. You had better—"

"Now, Muster Boreham, if *you* please," said a red-faced woman, noisily entering the school-room, unannounced except by the unhappy Biddle, whom she pushed in before her. She also carried a smaller Biddle in her arms, the relation being declared by the most prominent feature in its face, while the mouth was slightly distorted in consequence of its partaking of nutriment from the maternal fount, laid bare for him after the mode immortalized by Sir Peter Lely or Sir Godfrey Kneller, a mode not much admired in these days—that is, for morning costume.

Mrs. Biddle—for that was the lady in question—did not wear a very tidy appearance about the hair; for, in addition to its being in the state called touzly, her dirty cap was half off; while as to her dress, it was difficult to say whether it was most dirty or most ragged.

"Now, Mr. Boreham, if *you* please," said Mrs. Biddle, who then stopped short upon seeing the astonished curate. "Ho! I didn't know as you had company; but I want to know why my child is to be ill-used in this here way."

"My good woman," said the curate, loftily, "your child fell down."

"Then," said Mrs. Biddle, "I'll keep him at home, where he will be properly attended to."

And away she whisked the howling Biddle, and banged the door after her, leaving Mr. Boreham in a cold perspiration.

"—better," continued the curate from the point where he left off—"better at once change the plan, and let the first class be the first. Do you see—er?"

"Oh, certainly, sir, if you wish it," said Mr. Boreham; "but Mr. Glebeley—"

"Oh, allow me," said the curate, with dignity. "The Reverend Charles Glebeley has placed the superintendence of the schools entirely in my hands, and I must beg that such references may never again

be made. All applications for advice, or respecting alterations, must in future be made to me."

Mr. Boreham bowed grimly, and placed his hands beneath his coat-tails, which were rough from the accumulation of ink, for the good man scorned the little jig-jag pieces of cloth known as pen-wipers.

He then elevated his eyebrows, and sighed within himself—a sigh which was redoubled in intensity after the curate had been in the school for half an hour; for that gentleman announced that he was about to communicate with the proper authorities, and that a visit from the Government inspector might be expected at his next round.

The classes were examined turn by turn, with a grim, searching, mission-like aspect worn upon the curate's face; and little notes were taken with a little pencil upon little tablets, headed with the various subjects upon which the children had been questioned; and at last the first, late seventh, class was put to the ordeal at a time when Mr. Boreham was in an agony of vexation from the inability of the children to answer with promptitude the strange questions put to them in a strange voice by a strange person; and the poor master had scratched his head so viciously that his ordinarily smooth hair looked quite frightened.

If answering questions which they could not understand was the gauge by which the six classes were to be measured, they had certainly acquitted themselves very badly, and so Mr. Boreham thought—hence his uneasiness. But his troubles were not yet ended; for, sitting down in a most business-like way, the Reverend Augustus proceeded to take this last and highest class in hand.

In the first place, the curate gave them a searching series of questions upon tables of all kinds, and the master brightened up as the answers came forth quickly and to the purpose. But the reading would not do at all. The boys had a very bad pronunciation; their u's were either too flat or too sharp, and as to the r's, the burr upon them was dreadful, and must be altered.

"And, Mr. Boreham," said the curate, "I must have less noise in the rest of the school."

The master called for silence, and obtained it; for the school had certainly not been so quiet as usual, from the fact of his being so wrapped up in the examination that he saw nothing else.

Then came the Scriptural and Liturgical questions, when one boy said that Jephthah was the father-in-law of Moses; another that the children of Israel fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness; another named Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as four of the twelve patriarchs. No one had ever heard of Socinus, nor Justin Martyr; but St. Chrysostom was the man who had seven champions. No one knew where the Areopagus was, nor yet what was the meaning of the word heresy; while the climax was placed upon the examiner's disgust when a small boy eagerly said there were three articles of religion—*a*, *an*, and *the*.

Mr. Newman could stand no more that day, but rose with lips tightly compressed, and head shaking solemnly, and told the boys that they had much to learn yet. Which was quite true, and a very

unnecessary remark; for Mr. Boreham knew it well, although, in spite of irregular attendance—parents considering it a favour to send their children—dull brains, and a few other difficulties, he had been driving all the useful knowledge he could into the children in as direct a manner as was possible. But now all was to be changed, and he should probably have to go to the wall, to make room for new institutions, new teachings, and new methods—new machinery altogether, that would render him and his ideas obsolete. His train of musing was, however, broken by the approach of the Reverend Augustus, tablets in hand, who, with a great deal of importance and dignified speech, requested him to fill up some of the vacancies he had observed in the teaching of the children.

"You see, Mr.—er—er Boreham, I find that in many points there is a want of basis in the educational constitution of the children. I do not wish to particularize these points too finely, but will leave it to your good sense to endeavour to make up for this—er—er extremely low state of the school; for perhaps I'd better say it, I—er—er never in the whole course of my experience entered a school where so much ignorance was displayed. Good morning, Mr. Boreham; you will find me a regular attendant, as I take great interest in schools. Good morning."

The boys all rose and made a discharge of hand-flourishing bows, while Mr. Timothy Boreham mechanically followed the divine to the door, and then stumped back to his desk. He then wiped his damp forehead with the chalk-duster, put the ruler in his pocket, and, sitting down with his wooden leg projecting at right angles, propped his elbows upon the desk, his chin upon his hands, and gazed right away through the white-washed wall before him at the panorama of his own ordinary life. The work of the school came almost to a standstill; furtive games of "noughts and crosses" were indulged in; fancy sketches of the master—wooden leg not forgotten, but slightly exaggerated—were made; a chalk drawing of the late visitor, in a very stiff and angular frock coat, made its appearance upon the black board; but still there was no movement upon the master's part. The noise grew fast and furious, lulled, died away; increased in a perfect *crescendo*, until musical folk would have written it down with half-a-dozen *f*'s; but the solid stare at the white-washed wall lasted until twelve o'clock, when the children dismissed themselves. Thoughts far back into the past; thoughts far, far into the future; childhood; boyhood; school; the teacher taught; early manhood; accident; agonized nerves; hospital, with a pale youth anxiously gazing from face to face of the stern men around him; a father with quivering lip, and then the operation; life trembling for days in the balance; the gradual recovery of strength, till, out once more, earth seemed brighter than ever; school years gliding on in calm, unbroken repose; married life; children; grey hairs; and then, after years and years of earnest effort—after watching child after child grow into the smart servant lass or sturdy labourer, always ready to salute "old master" with a smile and curtsy or a pull at the forelock—now, after all—obsolete—school in

a bad state—Government inspector—constant visitor.

"What's the use?" said the master at last, addressing the round-faced Dutch clock, which kept staring hard at him, and pointing to a quarter to one—"what's the use? I dare say they are more clever and learned than I am. But then they can't get university men to teach village schools for fifty pounds a year; and such men as I do our best. Answer questions! Of course they don't, poor things, when put in what sounds to them almost like a foreign tongue. How could any one judge of the state of my school by an hour's questioning, without the knack of drawing the answers out of the boys. 'Give me dates for some of the principal events in English history.' Dear, dear! the boys stared, and well they might, at such a question; for I never taught the poor fellows dates, any more than I taught them the chapters or verses, or numbers of the pages they were reading. Dear, dear!" sighed Mr. Boreham again, as with heavy heart he slowly dismounted from his throne, and stumped back to the snug dinner that Mrs. Boreham had prepared for him.

But he could not eat, for the edge of his appetite had been completely blunted for that day, even though there was a dish of late peas from the rectory garden.

To Pike's Peak.

"I'LL go to Pike's Peak, or bust," said Zeph Grant, in a determined manner, as he adjusted the harness of a fine pair of bullocks, before putting them to in a covered waggon. "You'll soon see whether I mean it, I guess," he added, addressing a group of tall-looking Americans—some smoking, some chewing—who stood watching his proceedings.

"You'll be chewed up by Injuns, you bet," said one. "Better let one or two of us come along," said another.

"You'd be afraid," said Grant. "No, I'll go alone; and as for Injuns, there aint one of the whole lot of 'em would scare me."

"Praps not, but a dozen might. Look here, Zeph Grant, there's a mule train going to Pike's Peak next week. I reckon you'd best wait."

"Do you see that?" asked Zeph, pointing to the side of the waggon, on the canvas tilt of which was painted, in enormous letters, the words "Pike's Peak, or bust." "Wal, I did that, and I mean to stick to it; so it's no use for you fellows to fool around like this. I've got my gun, plenty of powder, as fine a pair of beasts as you'd see, and some vittles; and it'll take a good many Injuns to keep me from Pike's Peak, you bet your life."

It was about noon, and a very hot day, in the city of Denver, Colorado, where this little incident took place, and sundry idlers continued to add to the little group already collected round the waggon, which was standing in front of a small store.

Zeph Grant climbed in, and took the whip.

"Stand out of the way, some of you. I'm off."

At this moment, one man—a long, wiry, West-country boy—stepped forward, and, laying his hand on the side of the waggon, spoke earnestly—

"This is a real mad thing to do, Zeph. Give it up. It's not so long since Elijah Weston was killed; and there's a great many Injuns about just now. It's seventy mile, and you won't see a Christian before you get there."

The other made no reply; but gave the whip a snap to start the bullocks, when the man who had last spoken was obliged to fall back, as were the others who were standing round the animals' heads. They still looked incredulous, not really believing that the man would be so foolhardy as to attempt that long journey over desolate, wild, mountainous country alone, and with no protection but his gun against the murderous troops of wandering Sioux.

The Sioux or Dacotahs are well known to be hostile to white men, and, as they are generally well armed, are very formidable enemies even against a strong party; one man alone would have but little chance of escape should he encounter one of the numerous bands very often scattered over these desolate regions in search of game.

The waggon had gone about a hundred yards when Zeph raised the canvas at the back, to call out, in farewell—

"Pike's Peak or bust!"

And then the waggon jogged on slowly, the little crowd watching till it was lost to sight.

"He'll be in a funk as soon as he finds what it's like, and come back when he's gone a mile or two."

"He's a fool if he doesn't."

After a few other remarks of the same kind, the group disappeared by degrees, some dropping in for a liquor up of old rye before going about their business, which seemed to be loafing.

Meanwhile, Zephaniah Grant went on his way alone, a plug of tobacco in his mouth, and a contented expression on his not very prepossessing countenance. He was a lean, sallow-complexioned man, of somewhere between thirty and forty, with longish black hair, clean shaven, save for a thin, rather pointed beard.

For the first few miles the track was tolerably even, but it soon became more rugged and irregular, and the pace of the animals consequently slower. After three hours or so, he pulled up to give them a rest; and, getting down himself, walked about a little, to stretch his limbs, cramped with being so long in one position. The country in this part was flat, though in the distance mountain after mountain raised its snowy crest to touch the fleecy clouds which floated upward from the south. Some distance to his right the river gleamed at intervals from the ravine in which it ran. This was the south fork of the Platte, which for a few miles took the same direction as the track Zeph was following, before branching out more to the right, to be lost to view.

After half an hour's rest, Zephaniah, having refreshed himself by a draught from a bottle he had brought with him and a few biscuits, and the bullocks having recruited their forces by a browse on the long, coarse grass, they started again.

Another hour and another passed slowly by, the river disappeared, and the distant mountains seemed less distant. Another few miles and the country began to grow more uneven, while the mountains

came nearer, and the prospect became less inviting. Once Zeph felt a shudder of horror, in spite of his bragging before he started, as he fancied he saw the form of an Indian peering from behind a rock; but it was only the rugged branch of a tree, as he found when he came nearer. The clouds had been gathering fast for the last hour, and now the sky was overcast, the landscape was in shadow, and a distant rumble came on the breeze. The excessive loneliness of the place, the wildness of the landscape, the distance from any human habitation, and the threatening storm, to say nothing of the dread of the sudden appearance of some roving Indian, would have struck a chill to the heart of the bravest, and Zeph Grant, in spite of his foolhardiness, was something of a coward at heart.

He turned pale, and gave a shrinking glance round, half expecting to see dusky figures starting up on all sides; but there was no sign of life, and so he pushed on, looking out for some good place to shelter himself and the beasts. However, the rain began to come down before he had left the open, and by the time he had reached a place where a shelving rock offered some protection from the storm, he was wet to the skin, the rain having soaked through the covering of the waggon in a very short space of time.

The lightning flashed vividly, and the thunder rolled nearer and nearer; while the poor bullocks shivered all over with fear, and Zeph Grant heartily wished himself back at Denver.

The rain came down in sheets, and the blue lightning dazzled him every few seconds, while the thunder never seemed to cease. When the storm at length abated a little, it was growing dark, and it became evident that he must stay where he was for the night. Thereupon he proceeded to take the animals out of the waggon, and tethered them to a pine tree at a little distance. The rain had now almost ceased, but the thunder continued to rumble, distantly, without a moment's interruption.

Zeph tried to whistle to cheer himself up, as he got under the tilt again; but the thought striking him that he might be informing the Indians of his whereabouts, he relapsed into silence, and ate some of the bread and cheese he had brought with him for his supper, having first picked out the driest place he could find in the waggon.

Another draught of whisky and water and a fresh plug of tobacco raised his spirits; and making himself as comfortable as he could under the circumstances, which was not at all, he tried to go to sleep.

There was still a distant roll of thunder, and a few occasional flashes of lightning, while the wind now began to whistle and moan round the crags and in the tree-tops. The wet, too, kept dripping in through the tilt, with an incessant pat, pat, that made the situation more dismal than ever.

But Zeph was indifferent to it all. In spite of the elements, he dropped to sleep, muttering, just before he lost consciousness—

"Pike's Peak or bust."

He woke several times and changed his position, before going to sleep finally to wake no more till the sun had risen and was dispelling the mists hanging about in consequence of the night's rain.

He rose, feeling cramped, stiff, and rheumatic, and stumbled out of the waggon to take a look round. How different was the scene beneath the bright sunlight to what it had been in the dusk and gloom of the evening! Nature was smiling now, and even the barren, rugged sides of the mountains looked beautiful in the morning sun. He turned in again, and got something to eat, after which he proceeded to put the bullocks to. During this process, though he was not aware of it, he was watched by a pair of eyes from behind a rock, which pair of eyes belonged to the active, dusky form of a Sioux Indian.

But, though the shades of the evening before had suggested figures where none were in reality to the mind of Zeph Grant, the morning brightness had so far restored his mental equilibrium that he did not even give one fearful glance round; but whistled as he got ready to start, and patted the animals encouragingly. Then he stepped back to have another look at the big letters on the side of the van before getting in.

"Pike's Peak or bust," he said aloud, with a laugh. "Wal, I reckon we shall be there termorrer efternoon."

He then got in, and off they started again, at a slow, jogging pace. For nearly an hour he had been lost in thought, when he was roused by a sound behind him.

Whiz!

There was an arrow at his feet, which had come through the canvas. He seized his rifle, gave the bullocks a vigorous cut with the whip that made them quicken their pace, and then raised his piece, ready to fire at the first enemy who should present himself.

He had not long to wait. The next instant, an Indian on horseback passed the waggon, and then turning half round, took careful aim at its occupant.

But Zeph was too quick for him. He fired, and the savage fell, shot through the heart.

There was a savage yell from behind—a demoniacal, blood-curdling yell from some twenty or thirty throats—and the colour fled from the face of the American as he heard it.

A minute after, a dozen hands were at the bullocks' heads, stopping them; then followed the firing of a gun, the whiz of arrows, yells, oaths, groans, scuffling, blows, and cries for help, when there was no one within thirty miles to hear the cry.

This occurred on a Saturday. On the Monday following, a mule train was getting ready to start for Pike's Peak from Denver, amid a great deal of cursing and swearing; for the mules were obstinate, as they always are, and in those parts it is considered impossible to do anything with pack animals without a frightful number of oaths. King, in his "Mountaineering on the Sierra Nevada," gives a very good instance of this:—

"The great van rocked, settled a little on the near side, and stuck fast.

"With a look of despair, the driver got off, and laid the lash freely among his team; they jumped and jerked frantically, tangled themselves up, and at last all sulked and became stubbornly immovable. Meanwhile, a mile of teams behind, unable

to pass on the narrow grade, came to an unwilling halt.

"About five waggons back I noticed a tall Pike, dressed in a checked shirt, and pantaloons tucked into jack-boots. A soft felt hat worn on the back of his head displayed long locks of flaxen hair, which hung freely about a florid pink countenance, noticeable for its pair of violent little blue eyes and facial angle, rendered acute by a sharp, long nose.

"This fellow watched the stoppage with impatience; and at last, when it was more than he could bear, walked up by the other team with a look of wrath absolutely devilish. One would have expected him to blow up with rage; yet withal his gait and manner were cool and soft in the extreme. In a bland, almost tender voice, he said to the unfortunate driver—

"My friend, perhaps I can help you."

"And his gentle way of disentangling and patting the leaders would have given him a high office under Mr. Bergh. He leisurely examined the embedded wheel, and cast an eye along the road ahead. He then began in rather an excited manner to swear, pouring it out louder and more profane, till he utterly eclipsed the most horrid blasphemies I ever heard, piling them up thicker and more fiendish, till it seemed as if the very earth must open and engulf him.

"I noticed one mule after another give a little squat, bringing their breasts hard against the collars and straining traces, until only one old mule, with ears back and dangling chain, still held out. The Pike walked up, and yelled one gigantic oath; her ears sprang forward, she squatted in terror, and the iron links grated under her strain. He then stepped back and took the rein, every trembling mule looking out the corner of its eye, and listening at *qui vive*.

"With a peculiar air of deliberation and of child-like simplicity, he said, in everyday tones—

"Come up, then, mules."

"One quick strain, a slight rumble, and the waggon rolled on."

Among those who were going to Pike's Peak by this train were several of the men who had watched the departure of Zeph Grant. These were hazarding conjectures as to the fate of the latter.

"One of the redskins is wearing his scalp by this time."

"If he isn't comfortably settled at Pike's Peak."

"Poor devil! I guess we just sha'n't see him no more."

At last the train was started, and Denver City was left behind. It was early morning, and though the air was cool at present, it promised a very hot day. Slowly they journeyed over the track followed by Zeph two days before.

When they had got over some fifteen miles of ground, some of the men began to look at each other doubtfully; and they kept a good look-out ahead, almost expecting at any moment to come upon Zeph Grant's waggon, for there were signs of Indians having lately passed that way.

At length, in the distance ahead, they discerned certain dark moving spots, which gradually resolved

themselves into a party of Indians on ponies, coming towards them.

"We are in for a scrimmage, you bet," said one. "The Injuns are coming this way."

But he was mistaken, for the savages, apparently fearing their number, turned off to the left, and were soon lost to view.

Towards nightfall they had left the flat country behind, and were nearing the mountains, whose craggy sides they had to climb and descend before they would reach their destination. It was decided to halt near there for the night, and two were sent on in front to fix on a good sheltered and dry spot, with plenty of grass, where to encamp. One of these was the thin, wiry individual, by name Obed Ingle.

They cantered on in silence for some minutes, when the other suddenly said, excitedly—

"By George, Obed, I'm durned if that isn't Zeph Grant's van over there!"

They hurried forward, and then stopped, horror-struck at the picture which presented itself to their view.

There lay the remains of the adventurous Zeph, pierced through and through with arrows. An Indian war club lay near; one of the fine bullocks still retained its feet, though wounded by arrows; the other lay stiff and dead. A wild buffalo trotted off at their approach. While there, right before them, clear and distinct as when Zeph started, the words stared in large capitals from the waggon—

"Pike's Peak or bust."

Under the Yellow Flag.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE captain and Mr. Thomas went below soon after, with a lantern, leaving the sailors and passengers divided into two parties, the men being separated as much as possible; and these two divisions were set spell and spell at the pumps, to try whether, after all, the water could not be mastered. For the weather was almost calm, and the vessel glided easily along, though it was plain to see how much lower down she was, the distance from the deck to the surface being reduced by quite one-third.

There was an assumed cheerfulness in the aspect of both captain and mate when they came up from the hold, which did not deceive me, and going up I asked the result of their investigations.

"Nothing," was the laconic answer from the mate.

"It was impossible to make out anything, Mr. Leslie," said the captain. "The water has risen far above where the holes are bored. You had better make any papers you may wish to preserve safe upon your person. Don't spread the report, but work on with the rest; for I shall hold by the ship, I hope, for a couple of days yet."

A few minutes after, a little cold hand was laid in mine, and an appealing gaze directed in my face; but I arrested the words that were about to be spoken, on seeing that Graham was watching us earnestly.

"This is no time for excuses and attempts at pal-

liation," I said, quietly; and with a sigh she listened calmly to my instructions.

But it was hard work, staying on board a vessel that we all knew was sinking gradually inch by inch—that before long would give a heavy roll here and there, and then settle down in a whirlpool of its own creating, dragging down all within its reach lower and lower, beyond the possibility of salvation. I could not but think of how all depended upon one man's opinion, and of how we were trusting to one who could not be infallible, but might persuade us to stay until it was too late.

This was no time, though, for showing distrust; and we as passengers sought as well as we could to instil confidence in the men—a confidence that I do not believe existed in a single heart.

The pumping was kept up till the middle of the next day, principally through the unwearied determination of the passengers; but at last the captain gave the signal for the cessation of the unavailing labour.

"You must give up, gentlemen, and men all, for you make no impression at all."

As he ceased speaking, the men wearily left their task, and the bright water ceased to flow out of the scuppers. Every eye was now directed to him, as if seeking orders to lower the boats; but a full hour was spent in further preparations, additional biscuit, and another cask of water being lowered into each boat. Then taking his position, pistol in hand, at one gangway, the first mate being stationed at the other, the captain had the passengers passed slowly and in good order into the two boats—women first, then men, and then sailors; till, as I stood there with Eve at my side, I could see that the thwarts were already crowded to excess, and that there would not be room for us.

Half an hour before, it had come to her turn to be lowered down, but she had refused to leave my side, and for a moment my heart softened; but I knew that Graham was standing by, helping to lower down the passengers, and my teeth met upon my lips, and I said nothing.

At last only four remained on deck. One boat had pushed off, rowed round and lay at a little distance, freighted so heavily that as she floated low down in the water, rising and falling upon the swell, it was plain enough to see that if the wind freshened ever so little she must be swamped.

Application had been made to us to relieve them of a portion of their load, but the cry that now came up from our own boat was sufficient answer.

"Only room for one more!"

For one more! And there were four of us—the captain, Graham, Eve, and myself.

"That one must be your wife, Mr. Leslie," said the captain, calmly; for he had now thrown off all affectation, and spoke quietly and in earnest tones.

"No, no!" exclaimed Eve, eagerly; "let him go! Take my husband. And oh, Willy," she whispered, with her face close to mine, "you have wronged me grievously."

Again those words, and she praying now to be left with the utterer of them, poor girl! She gave a faint scream as the rope was fastened round her waist, and the next moment she was slung down

into the boat, which rocked about dangerously, as Timkin forced his way to the rope, and then was on deck in an instant.

"You can join your wife, Mr. Leslie," said the captain.

It was a hard struggle, that; and I stood for a few moments meeting fiercely Paul Graham's eye; and then the devil in my heart triumphed, as I said, bitterly—

"I will give place to Mr. Graham."

"For why should I live?" I asked myself. "What is life to me?" And strong as the desire for life seemed, it was crushed down by the mad rage within me, as I watched the effect my words would have upon Graham, who, however, did not move to avail himself of my offer.

In another moment I felt myself seized from behind by Timkin, Graham, and the captain, made fast in the sling, and as I was lowered down in the vacant place in the boat, my hands were again seized by Eve, to lie cold in hers without responding to their pressure.

"Push off!" shouted the captain.

And we were rowed a short distance from the vessel, and then lay to, watching; while Timkin and Graham began to throw hencoops and spars over the side, for the purpose, apparently, of forming a raft. At the same time, the captain was seen to climb up into the foretop, and, shading his eyes with his hands, gaze long and earnestly around. Then, as if not satisfied, he climbed to the cross-trees, and, after looking fixedly in one direction, he gave a joyful shout.

"Land ho!" he cried, in the well-known tones.

And his words sent a thrill through every breast; for we had thought him to be looking in search of the boats, which had gradually disappeared from view.

In a few minutes he was once more on deck, to summon the crews of each boat back on board, a command they obeyed somewhat unwillingly; and then, with a long tow-line made fast to each, he gave order after order, working himself with all his power, till sail after sail was set, and the vessel crowded with canvas, when, turning her head in the direction of the land, he kept by the wheel himself, and we were soon gliding swiftly through the water, the sea rising almost in a bank on each side of our little craft, which seemed to be ploughing their way through a liquid channel; while high above us, with bellying sails, but hull low down in the water, staggered along the great East Indiaman.

CHAPTER IX.

EVEN without the sailors the boats were tolerably crowded, to an extent even that seemed to threaten danger, as from time to time the spray leaped over the bows. But our thoughts were mostly intent upon the huge vessel that dragged us onward; and, moved by the same impulse, Mr. Stayman in one boat, and one of the passengers in the other, sat in the bows, knife in hand, ready to sever the tow-rope, should one of the heavy plunges the vessel made from time to time under a press of sail prove to be her last, before the waves should meet over her deck, and then slowly rise up mast after mast, past each

yard, till the trucks disappeared in the mighty waste, and a few loose fragments should be all that was left to show where she had foundered.

But though she staggered and rolled heavily, the great ship kept afloat, speeding on, with the wind freshening slightly, so as to make her topmast bend and sway as if ready to break at any moment.

At times I thought we should have been swamped in the fierce rush of waters in the Indian's wake; but our danger being observed from the deck, the tow-ropes were lengthened out, so that we tore along in comparative safety, the passengers taking it in turn to bale out the water which washed in over the sides.

From time to time one or another of the sailors anxiously peeped over the side to see how low the vessel was down in the water, and two or three times over it seemed to us that a panic seized the men, for the boats were hailed, and signals made to us to close up, these signals being directly after contradicted by the captain, the mate, or Timkin, who bellowed, in a voice of thunder—

"Keep back—it's all right!"

It was very evident that Captain Black intended to hold out to the very last, in the hope of making the land; for now we saw the water come bubbling out of the scuppers again in a swift stream, showing that the pumps were once more manned; but before we could catch sight of land from the boats, we could see that the good ship's last hour had sped; for she sank lower and lower, while efforts were made to bring her to. The boats were then hauled up, and men hurried down, till only three were left—the captain, Graham, and the big sailor, who all jumped overboard to some more hen-coops thrown out, to which they clung while a rope was passed to them, the sailors then pushing off, rowing hard, but in a confused and hurried way, in the midst of the crowd around them.

And now the question arose, should we get away in time to be beyond the reach of the whirling waters when the ship went down? She was reeling now, as if from weakness, careening over, first on one side and then on the other, while her sails flapped loudly in the wind. We were in a state of intense excitement, too, on board our boat, lest we should be dragged down by the sinking vessel; for the tow-line was still fast to us, the knot tightened by the water, and, in the confusion caused by the sailors crowding in, the passenger who was to have cut the rope had let his knife fall into the sea.

A cry was raised that the vessel was going down, and a terrible scene of confusion arose, men struggling together to reach the rope; but it was cut at last, just as I felt that in the struggle one side must dip under, and that the boat would be swamped. Men then seized their oars again, and rowed for their lives, dragging the coops with their living freight behind, when, as if to make our own escape certain, the Chinaman drew his knife as he sat close by me in the stern, and would have cut them adrift, if I had not caught him by the wrist and wrested the blade from his hand.

And even then—I will not shrink from owning it—I had hesitated, for something seemed to whisper, "It will not be your doing, and you will then be free

of your enemy." But I beat down the temptation, crushed it out; and, upon the Chinaman's insisting, I got him down in the boat, and held him there, when Captain Black's voice was heard, but his words were drowned in the groan that rose from both boats.

CHAPTER X.

IT was a wild, despairing groan that arose as, just as we were about a quarter of a mile from the vessel's side, she gave one heavy lurch backward, as if to raise her bows for the plunge, and then slowly and majestically dipped down out of our sight—hull-tops, cross-trees, the royals, and then the trucks, disappearing in succession, until nothing was visible but a few spars whirling and tossing about in the angry waters. All regards were then turned upon the captain, whose back was towards us, as he clung to the frail little raft they had bound together; for his head appeared to sink, while his broad shoulders heaved as if great sobs were escaping from his chest; and at the same moment I saw Mrs. Black's face go down in my wife's lap, as she wept bitterly.

But Captain Black was captain still, though he had no ship. Short time he gave to sorrow; but turning towards us, pale of face, he hauled upon the rope till he was close up, and then asked to look at the compass.

"Keep her a little more to the south," he said to the man steering. "Keep a good heart on board there; we shall sight the land soon."

Then, hailing the other boat, he told Mr. Thomas, who was in command, to follow closely in our wake.

"Hadn't you better cut adrift, and come on board us, sir?" came back in answer.

"No, no," shouted the captain; "you are low enough in the water as it is. We shall soon make land of some kind or another—and I rather like this," he added, with an attempt at his old crotchety humour. "Mr. Leslie," he said, the next moment, to me, "let the steersman and the man next you help, so as to have as little struggling as possible, and then heave that yellow Chinese scoundrel overboard. He tried to cut us adrift, so let him try the raft; and, Mr. Graham, you take his place. Hush! no hesitation, gentlemen. I am as much captain now as I was on board the ship. Over with him!"

However unwilling I might be, there was no compunction on the part of the sailors; and before the shivering, frightened wretch could raise a hand in defence, he was pitched over the side, to swim in a moment or two to the raft, and cling there, the most abject picture of horror and dread imaginable.

"Now, you scoundrel, hold on there; and if I see any show of foul play again, it will be in your last moments. I've a shrewd suspicion of something else, mind."

And he leaned over towards the man, and pointed towards where the vessel had floated a few moments before.

"Kwi Tse no sink a ship," he cried, or rather shrieked; and his face grew more yellow, and burst out into blotches—"ship sink 'self."

And then, shrinking farther away, to the very extremity of the spars forming the raft, he shrieked

horribly, as squeals a rat when driven to bay and its pursuers are close at hand.

Just then the remembrance of the panting noise I had heard over the bows occurred to me, and I recalled to mind the dark figure that had glided over the bulwarks, the shadow I had more than once encountered, and the gnawing, working noise, and the trickling sound as of water or spirit running.

But my attention was taken up the next moment by the captain, as he clung there to the raft, and seemed to read through and through every thought and feeling of the wretch within a few feet of his arm. Then he seemed to wrench his eyes away, and turned once more towards the boat.

"Now, Mr. Graham, please take that man's place."

"But, Captain Black—"

"My dear sir," exclaimed the captain, "you have been like a right hand to me so far. Don't turn against me now."

Graham smiled, and stretched his own right hand across a hencoop to the captain, and for a moment their hands were joined in a firm, brotherly grasp. The next instant, without a word, the young man climbed, all dripping, into the boat; and I would have given years of my life if, just then, I could have taken his hand in the same way; but I could not for the burning pain at my heart, and could only return a fierce look to his calm, quiet gaze, as he took his seat beside me, and whispered the one word—

"Forebodings!"

For at that moment I hated him worse than ever, telling myself that, but for the manner in which he had seemed to blast my career, I could have acted in the same gallant, self-denying way. So I sat on, brooding over my wrong, fiercely watching his every look, and almost forgetful of the men behind upon the little raft.

There was not much wind, or we must have been swamped over and over again. So crowded were the boats, that it was with the greatest difficulty the men could contrive to row; but we kept progressing slowly, till when a man stood up in the front of the boat he could make out the long, low line of coast, apparently an island, with the white, foaming line of breakers washing the shore.

I don't think at that time the captain's suspicion, which I felt to be the same as my own, was shared by any of the men; for most of them, worn out by their exertions, were stolidly indifferent to what took place around, merely using their remaining strength to urge the heavily laden boat through the water.

Apparently as much at ease clinging to the little raft as if on board a goodly vessel, Captain Black gave from time to time various orders, such as for the passengers to take a spell at rowing twice over, he and Timkin changing places with men in the boat, and rowing hard; but only to go back afterwards to the raft and cling there as before. Such changes were not made without difficulty, but there was an intense desire apparent on all sides to make the best of things; and all through those long hours, from sunset right into the night, as we rowed on, turn and turn, there was not a murmur to be heard, nor was there a harsh word spoken.

At last we were close in shore, looking anxiously for a place where we could land, but in vain; nor, though they rowed in an opposite direction, had the other party any better success. To attempt to land amongst so much surf would have been little better than madness, since even had we had an active crew, and plenty of room to manage her, the boat must almost certainly have been upset. So, hailing the other crew, the captain proposed that we should lie to until morning. And there we lay, crowded together, rising and falling on the waves, watching the stars rise and sink out of sight in the sea, wondering whether we had hit upon a friendly shore, and whether there would be help to be obtained here to bear us to some large port.

The hours went by slowly, but twice over the captain ordered some refreshments to be served out, and they were passed from hand to hand in the dark, one cheering up another with a few pleasant words; and if I could have crushed out the misery in my heart, I should not have felt my position so very keenly, but have tried like the others to whisper comfort, and make the best of our condition, as we sat there waiting for the light.

CHAPTER XI.

THE first pale light of dawn came at last, and we peered anxiously towards the shore, trying to make out what manner of coast it might be; but at first nothing was visible but a few palm-like trees, and a sandy beach upon which the long rollers broke in a silvery foam. But soon the glow began to appear in the east, lighting up the little flecks of clouds with orange light; then came the first sight of the sun, peering along the surface of the water, and as the men once more bent to their oars it was in the full light of a glorious day.

Captain Black gave his orders clearly and decidedly from where he was, and now called for a piece of lashing; for, with his hand tightly clutching a lump of dark-looking gum, the Chinaman was hanging half off the raft, apparently in a state of stupor. Early in the night we had heard him muttering in his own tongue, but of late he had been very quiet; and when Timkin touched him, the poor wretch glided off the grating quite dead.

"Give way, men," said the captain.

And they rowed on and on, mile after mile, always past the same coast line of fierce, angry surf, that would have instantly swamped our boats had we tried to land. The passengers relieved the men at last, slowly one by one taking the others' places; and again we rowed on, just outside the rough water, till we must have gone nearly half round the island—for such it appeared to be—when we hit upon a pleasant-looking cove, with grove-like trees running almost close down to the shore. There was scarcely any surf here either, and, as the island was apparently uninhabited, we rowed in at once, beached the boats, and were soon landed, to seek some place where we could snatch a few hours' rest.

But at present this was denied to the men, to whom fell the task of reconnoitring, and being on the look-out for danger, of securing the boats, and landing the stores sufficient for the day's consump-

tion, while a sort of tent was rigged to afford shelter for the women.

It was not long before the reconnoitring party returned, with the news that they had climbed the highest eminence they could find; but to all appearance the place was without inhabitants, but some miles off to the east there appeared to be another island.

We were too weary to trouble much for the future that day, it was enough that we were safe; and as I looked at the large party on the sandy beach, it seemed wonderful that the little boats secured to a couple of the cocoa trees should have borne so many in safety. I was the last to lie down, gazing upward at the bright sky, fast becoming encrusted with stars; then, in spite of my aching heart, weariness prevailed; for we had had many hours of occupation and watching since we landed, omitting no precaution to ensure our obtaining a tranquil and serene night of repose. As I lay, the stars and the waving trees above me grew dim, and the blank of a deep sleep fell upon my tired senses.

For a time my sleep was without dreams; but soon I was once more in the great Indiaman; then in the boats, with a mighty tempest springing up, and the waves tossing our little arks of safety as if they were corks upon the foam. Then came the hissing and shrieking of the wind; the spray, cut from the top of the waves, dashed in my face; and voices asking for help were heard one minute, to be swept away the next.

How long I was dreaming, how long half dreaming, half awake to the reality, I cannot tell; but at last I had struggled up to cling to one of the trees close by, which bent and shivered, and curled about like some whip, as a furious hurricane swept across the island, tearing up trees by the roots, cutting others down as with a knife, making the waves to leap madly upon the beach, and producing a din and confusion of mind that it was hard to battle with. But at length I became cognizant of the danger we had escaped at sea, though it seemed hardly less perilous ashore.

Cries for help led me to where the sails of the two boats had been stretched over the masts as a tent, and beneath this, and half buried in drifting sand, were those who had trusted to its shelter in the night; and when at length the heavy wet canvas was dragged away, the hurricane seemed to come down with redoubled fury, shrieking through the trees, while the sand and spray seemed to cut the skin wherever it was exposed. Nothing could be done but crouch down close to the ground, and let the fury of the storm pass over; the women clinging together, the men collecting on the side nearest the sea, so as to try and break the violence of the wind before it smote the more fragile.

Swiftly as it had come on, the fearful storm seemed to cease, and in an hour all was once more peaceful and still, with the stars peering brightly down; but with the dawn came the gloomy picture of the havoc made: the stripped trees, the sand-hidden glades, and the group of pale, shivering creatures who had been exposed to the fury of the elements. With the morning, too, came the sight of another misfortune: one boat cast high up on

the sands, apparently uninjured, but the other nowhere to be seen; for, torn from its fastenings by the rising waves, it had evidently been swept out to sea, destroying the prospect of escape from the island for fully half of the helpless creatures cast ashore.

There was a terrible battle going on within me about this time, the good and the evil striving for mastery; but whenever there seemed any prospect of my better feeling prevailing for awhile, moved perhaps by the tender, uncomplaining looks of Eve, something happened to turn the preponderance of feeling in the other direction, since Paul Graham was always at hand, apparently for the purpose of insulting me and inflaming my unreasoning passion. Explanations enough might have taken place, but for my determination to hear none. I had decided in my own mind that I had been tricked and deceived; and so strong a hold had the thoughts obtained, so deeply had their roots laced and interlaced to the choking down of purer growth, that in those moments I believe no assertions, no oaths, even from lips I had long trusted, would have influenced me in the slightest degree.

The news was bruited about now that Kwi Tse had bored holes in different parts of the vessel, in revenge for the treatment he had received; and, now that it was too late, the carpenter recalled that he had missed an augur, and that he had more than once seen the Chinaman hanging about the tool chest. The watch, too, had once seen him climb up out of the mizen chains in the dead of night, besides which he had often been missing for hours together, when no one could tell of his whereabouts; though at the time he had always been credited with hiding away in some hole or corner to indulge himself in his opium-eating propensity. But now, with a burst of execration, the evil that had befallen the ship was unanimously laid upon his shoulders, and had he been upon the island, it is doubtful whether the presence of the captain would have sufficed to save him from the resentment of passengers and crew.

Chased by a Shark.

IT certainly was rather warm that March morning at Aspinwall, the Atlantic station of the Isthmus of Panama.

So thought the newly-arrived passengers per *Ariel*, at all events, having left New York a week before in a severe frost, with snow a foot deep in the streets, and a keen wintry blast howling through the ice-cased rigging of the steamer. What a contrast in so short a time! Here at Aspinwall the heat was quite tropical, speedily compelling Frank and me to invest a couple of dollars in broad-leaf Panama hats, under the protection of which we lounged about the amusing little settlement, greatly appreciating such novelties as cocoa palms, bananas, cotton plants, and other tropical vegetation; the "well-coloured" physiognomies and somewhat picturesque attire of the half Indian, half nigger natives; the lazy turtle, basking on the surface of the big tanks near the landing stage; and the abundance of oranges, cocoa nuts, pine apples, iced

lemonade, delicious cigars, and other open-air refreshments, offered at a very reasonable price to the new arrivals.

The impulse for thorough ablution which comes naturally to an Englishman after a voyage, either by sea or land, led my comrade and myself very soon to seek out a convenient spot for a bathe.

At a short distance from the end of the main street, near a little plantation, where a lot of American fellow-passengers were popping away most assiduously at marks with their newly-regained revolvers, was a nice-looking beach of mingled sand, shingle, and rough coral; and on a log which lay there conveniently, I quickly deposited my clothes, leaving Frank to protect them from any kleptomania-afflicted "culled pussions," while I proceeded to disport myself in the briny.

On stepping into the clear water I found myself on a coral reef, submerged to only the extent of six to eighteen inches for a distance of some fifty yards, at the end of which I could see that it suddenly sheered off into deep water. This was annoying; for to swim where I was was impossible, and the rough coral was in many places exceedingly sharp, so that I made very bad going; and being quite a "new chum," was under considerable anxiety as to the probable presence of aggressive "common objects of that sea-shore," such as gigantic crabs or lobsters, evil-minded cuttle-fish, startling electric rays, &c. But I met none of these as I stumbled on, painfully making efforts to reach the deep water. I only saw lots of pretty, harmless-looking little fish, of varied and brilliant colours, skeddaddling from almost under my feet, while the lovely little flying-fish darted out of the water in all directions, and plunged into it again after a flight of from ten to thirty yards.

As I was getting within quite an easy distance of the water, my eyes bent upon the reef that I was walking on—partly to pick out the smoothest stepping-places, and partly to observe all the new forms of animal and vegetable life—I was startled by a great shout from the shore; and, turning hastily round, beheld Frank—who had hitherto been sitting quietly on the log, smoking a pipe of navy tobacco—standing up, gesticulating wildly, while he cried out—

"A shark! a shark!"

"Where?" I shouted back.

"Right ahead of you," was the reply.

And there he was, true enough, just in the deep water outside my reef, and beginning to make dashes at what I now considered my stronghold, in a manner unpleasantly suggestive of "chawing me up." My first impulse, of course, was to run for it; equally natural was it, of course, for me to cut my foot on something particularly sharp, and come down sprawling in the shallow water. On rising, and casting another hasty glance at the big head and huge back fin of my enemy, I saw that he was evidently hungry and excited, and making frantic efforts to get at me; but that, being a big shark, success in his laudable attempts was not within the resources of science—in fact, morally and physically impossible, for there was scarcely water enough to swim a good-sized salmon.

Being convinced of this highly comfortable state of things, I at once became cool and jolly; and, calling out to Frank to run to the United States Hotel, and fetch my rifle and a little bag of ammunition, which I always kept handy for chance occasions of sport, I prepared to have a little "chaff" with the "sea lawyer."

Picking up all the loose bits of shingle, coral, &c., that I could find, I commenced pelting him unmercifully. I don't suppose my light missiles hurt him through his tough skin, but he evidently took them as direct personal insults, got considerably riled, made most desperate charges at the reef, lashed the water into foam with his tail, and altogether behaved in a most unphilosophical manner, to my intense amusement, convinced as I now was of my complete personal safety. In ten minutes Frank was back with the loaded rifle, which he handed to me. I took a hasty aim for the shark's eye, but his movements were so rapid that he got the ball in his back, a few inches behind his head, which probably would not materially injure him; though, to my surprise, on receiving the shot he immediately made sail for the open, swimming at first so near the surface that we could trace him by the top of his back-fin for a considerable distance.

You may imagine that after this specimen of the hospitable denizens of the deep I preferred giving myself a sort of "sitz-bath" in the shallows, and soon emerged, refreshed and hungry. A few niggers had collected round Frank, and were expressing their astonishment at the sight of the shark, saying they had seen none for months previously.

I relieved my friend, who went in for his ablutions, after which we walked quietly back to the U.S. Hotel; and over a very fair breakfast, for which only half a dollar was charged, I told the yarn, which could hardly be called an adventure, to a lot of our fellow-passengers per *Ariel*.

I should never have thought of making so "much cry for little wool" as to bring this very tame shark story before the public, but for the following sequel, which is amusingly illustrative of Yankee inventiveness or exaggerativeness (rather an Irish sort of word this last).

A month after the above occurrence, having been staying for a fortnight at a little boarding-house in Sansome-street, San Francisco, I took a fancy one day to try a dinner at the What Cheer House, an hotel where they don't go in for a big, hurried, scuffling Yankee *table d'hôte*, but give you A 1 meals at all hours, *à la carte*—their salmon cutlets, peaches and milk, and buckwheat cakes being particularly commendable to the notice of intending emigrants as "excellent substitutes for butter at breakfast."

I got into a quiet, rather dark corner, where I could observe without being seen by many people, and was attentively perusing the *carte* of the day, when my ear was struck by the loud voice of Colonel W., a Federal officer, and late fellow-passenger from New York. He had not seen me, and was busy relating to four Californian friends at a neighbouring table my identical little shark story, giving the exact place and date—viz., Aspinwall, 22nd of March, 186—, but improving the occasion, when he got to the shooting business, as follows:—

"So you see, strangers, I found out that the darned skunk couldn't reach me, and I determined I'd make him pay for having scared me at first. Well, I went ashore to my clothes, took out my six-shooter and a small coil of rope (always carry that, you see—it's handy for lynching a thief or a red-skin varmint, and many small matters), walked up to within five yards of that shark, gave him barrel No. 1 'kerslap' through his right eye. He turned round to squint at me with his left—plugged that up with barrel No. 2. That completely killed that varmint, you bet! Well, I wasn't going to lose his skin—never lose the skin of a beast or varmint, or the scalp of a redskin, that's my motto. So I got to the edge of the reef, got hold of that shark, hitched the bit of rope tight round his tail, hauled him right ashore, skinned him with my own bowie, packed the skin up in my trunk, had just time to get aboard the cars for Panama, gave lots of the skin away to the other passengers between Panama and San Francisco, but I've got a little left, and that I've just had made into tobacco pouches. Here's one of 'em; look"—showing the article in question, of new shagreen, but I imagine not of the skin of *my* friend, the Aspinwall sea lawyer.

I may mention also that we had seldom known Colonel W. to wash, never to bathe; and that the whole of the few hours between our landing at Aspinwall from the *Ariel* and the starting of the Isthmus train that gallant officer had spent in eating, drinking, and smoking.

His tale of my shark amused me "muchly," as poor Artemus would say, and did not spoil my appetite for the green turtle soup and other Californian delicacies. He and his acquaintances got up rather before me, and in passing my table the colonel for the first time caught sight of the original narrator of the "shark circumstance."

With unblushing impudence, and a look half threatening, half humorous, he said to me—

"Why, guess you're the Britisher that travelled with me from New York! You remember that little yarn about a shark I told some of you at Aspinwall? Come and drink a cobbler."

What would you have said or done in such a case, reader? If a prudent, amiable, and peace-loving person, you would probably have done as I did—*i.e.*, accepted the cobbler of friendship and the Havana of peace, and refrained from a contradiction of the gallant colonel, which would probably have involved a "difficulty," not unconnected with pistols.

The Egotist's Note-book.

OF the gathering waters there seems to be no end.

They are now advertising "The Exquisite Apollinaria." This is good. Only why don't the others follow suit, and give us The Blooming Bellthal, The Tonic Taunus, The Flippant Fredericshall, The Sultry Seltzer, The Hysterical Hunyadi, The Graceful Ginger, and The Lively Lemon? If we go on like this, the brawny Briton will soon have water on the brain.

The following is fra' the North. A pitman took

his son to Newcastle for the first time, and the wish of his heart was "ti tyek sum o' thi shopkeepers down a peg or two," through the instrumentality of his hopeful son, who was reckoned a sharp little fellow. The pair, father and son, soon reached a confectioner's shop, where the hopeful's eye was caught by a placard in the window announcing to all who might be concerned, "that they sold sugar sticks five for 2d." "Five for 2d.," said the young hopeful, "that's four for 1½d., three for 1d., two for ½d., one for nowt." Without more ado, he went into the shop for "a candy stick for nowt, bekas that's thi price o' them in thi window!" The father was delighted, but the shopkeeper did not exactly see how it was.

Here is the title of a new story, "Lutchmee and Dilloo: A Study of West Indian Life." By Edward Jenkins, M.P. Perfection! I don't know which I like best—the Lutchmee or the Dilloo.

Pleasant things these explosive bullets. They are, of course, made of lead, and are cast in a mould of such a form that the bullets, instead of being solid throughout, have a cylindrical hollow extending from the apex nearly to the base. The hollow is filled with gunpowder, which is capped with an explosive mixture consisting of chlorate of potash, oxide of antimony, and sulphur. A plug of wax fills up the orifice and forms the apex of the bullet, and a little spirit varnish over the wax makes the "shell" complete. This bullet is tolerably safe to handle, though a blow on the apex will, as a matter of course, produce an explosion. When projected from a rifle, and meeting with a resisting substance, the bullet explodes, and forms an irregularly-shaped, more or less jagged, piece of lead, from which portions may fly off. If it strikes the soft parts, say of a limb, it may penetrate an inch or two before it bursts, and in that case the aperture of entrance differs in no respect from that of an ordinary bullet. The aperture of exit, however, will form a large, irregular wound, perhaps as large as a crown piece. How proud the gentle Christian must be who invented them!

M. Gambetta's fine was mentioned the other day before a Scot.

"Is he?" remarked the latter. "Weel, he may be; but MacMahon's the mon for my siller."

I saw an announcement in the paper the other day. Here it is: "THE LATE MDLLE. TITIENS.—The funeral of the late Mdle. Titiens will take place to-morrow at one o'clock at Kensal-green Cemetery. A cabinet portrait of this much lamented lady has been published by —." It is not necessary to give the name of the photographer who thus combines lamentation and trade; but one cannot help thinking of the stonemason's widow in America, who had placed upon her husband's tomb—"The business is still carried on by his relict. Tombs in this style 100 dollars."

So Cremorne is at an end, like Ranelagh and Vauxhall; and the building insect will soon cover it with "eligible residences." It was a favourite place in its

palmy days, but never came up to Ranelagh, where Horace Walpole used to go. He tells us he went there one evening with Lady Caroline Petersham. The party was conveyed by barge, "with a boat of French horns attending," and amongst them was Lord Granby, who "had arrived very drunk." The ladies, we are told, minced seven chickens into a china dish, and Lady Caroline stewed them over a lamp, "with three pats of butter and a flagon of water." Betty, the fruit girl, was present with hampers of strawberries; and "the whole air of our party was sufficient to take up the whole attention of the gardens." Foolish man! It was not the air of the party, but the smell of the chickens.

'Tis curious how the Middlesex magistrates arrange their mutual organization in the giving of licences at the annual Brewster sessions. Skating rinks have fallen under the severest magisterial censure. In one case, a licence for music, which has been in force for years, has been rescinded, simply because a skating rink has been laid down in the garden. In another, that of the South Kensington Rink, an equally stern and Spartan severity has controlled the course of justice. The rink in question is one to which a prohibitory price is charged for admission. It is under the control of a committee of gentlemen in the neighbourhood, no refreshments are sold at it, and no complaint has ever been made. The magistrates, however, granted a renewal of the licence of the Argyll Rooms.

Here is a very curious baby story. A mother and a daughter were confined on the same day, each having a little son. In the bustle of the moment, both babies were placed in the same cradle, and, to the confusion of the mothers, when the youngsters were taken from the cradle, they were unable to tell which was the mother's and which was the daughter's son—a matter which, of course, must ever remain a mystery. "How dreadful!" a lady friend exclaims. Well, it was not dreadful, but decidedly awkward. Why, as they grow up, the young fellows would be perhaps calling one another uncle, when it was a nephew that was addressed.

Nobody need be unable to give his town friends a little shooting this October. "We all recollect," writes a correspondent on this topic, "that a shooting party at — were kept waiting until the train from London had arrived with pheasants. Not only are live pheasants bought, but dead pheasants are bought or hired for the day. At a large shooting party in —, nearly a hundred head of game was added to the bag, and mixed up with the game we had killed. It was afterwards discovered that the pheasants and hares had been hired from a dealer for the day. There was a large bag made up." After this, what unfortunate angler need hesitate to purchase a few herrings or mackerel to bring home to his confiding wife? She would never know, so long as the herrings had not been turned into bloaters, when she might grow suspicious.

There can be no doubt of the bravery of the Japanese. A traveller there gives the following

account of the demeanour of a prisoner:—"First of all came two men, bearing placards raised on poles—the one proclaiming the nature of the crime for which the offender was to suffer and the punishment he was to undergo, the other inscribed with his name and native place. Immediately following rode the doomed man, tied to his horse, with his arms tightly pinioned behind him, and a rope fastened to his waist, held by a man who walked alongside. Never had it been our luck before, and we trust it may never be again, to behold a creature in God's image reduced to such a state. With a skin blanched, parched, and shrivelled, features worn and distorted, eyeballs glazed and sunk, his cheek bones appearing to be forcing themselves out, and his withered arms hanging nerveless at his side, the wretched being strove hard to bear himself bravely, and to behave at the last as became one of his race. As he passed, his eye lit on our party, and he called out, with a scornful laugh, for "the foreigners to see how a Nippon could die."

This is not a bad story of a Hibernian:—

Policeman (stopping a hack driver): "Look here, now, don't you know there's an ordinance requiring every carriage to have a lantern at night?"

"An' sure, sir, what nade have I for a lantern at all, at all? Can ye not see for yurself, sir, that me horse is blind?"

This next is more touching to the feelings. Probably the Turks would like him to join the Red Cross party:—

"Is he a good doctor?" asked one gentleman of another, speaking of an acquaintance.

"Well, people call him so," replied the other; "but as far as my experience goes, if I was a patriotic man, and there was going to be a long war, I should like him to have the charge of the enemy's wounded."

It is no use to attempt to catch an able-bodied mouse with a knock-kneed pair of tongs. Just as you have got the mouse sure, and are bringing him to judgment, the tongs give way, and the joyful mouse scampers gleefully off, as glibly as a scholar rushes for the table at a Sunday-school festival.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyl-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER XV.—A SORE POINT.

"A CONFOUNDED humbug, Steve; I haven't patience with the fellow, patronising me before all the people at the Rectory, as if I were a school-boy. But there, it's of no use growling; there's a regular set of these uncomfortable fellows about. I expect they have a regular hatching-bed for them at Oxford, and then they come out with a mission to revive everything, from a boot up to a code of morality. I verily believe they would interfere with an old woman stocking-darning, and try to show her a new way. Reverend Augustus Newman, I should like to have you for a month in our set upon the Cam! But surely Mr. Glebeley will never keep him; he'll set the whole place by the ears."

"Oh, never mind," was the reply. "I want to take a turn or two round after the hawks, for they are murdering the young pheasants wholesale. Step out."

The above fragment of a conversation took place as Frank and Stephen Vaughan were walking down the Hall avenue, when they leaped the ring fence, crossed the lawn, and entered the drawing-room by one of the French windows—innovations introduced in place of the old leaden casements by Mrs. Vaughan. Frank had been quite at home at the Hall from a boy, and now, with Stephen's wiry terrier at their heels, the young men entered the room, when the first thing that met their gaze was, as Stephen Vaughan afterwards indignantly expressed it, "the devil himself"—that is to say, the Reverend Augustus Newman, propounding some fresh theory to Mrs. Vaughan and Alice; the former lady seeming very ill-at-ease, while, upon the young men entering the room, the eyes of the latter twinkled maliciously.

The curate was sitting very upright upon a low *prie-Dieu* chair, with his knees forming a sharp angle, when the new-comers arrived; and after the customary salutations, he reseated himself—a proceeding rather ungraciously followed by Frank and Stephen, while Bob, the terrier, proceeded to smell the visitor all over as far as he could reach, twitching his ears the while, and looking at him very suspiciously, with the same sideway glance that he bestowed upon any one of the gipsy fraternity or sisterhood, concluding his inspection, to the intense delight of the more mischievous part of the company, by touching the limp white hand of the Reverend Augustus with a cold, wet nose, thereby greatly disturbing the visitor's equanimity, and making him chop a sentence respecting clothing clubs right in half.

But in spite of his sharp jump the visitor immediately recovered his composure, and Bob was sent outside the window, a proceeding against which he protested with a howl. A few passing remarks were then made, and the visitor took his departure, leaving Alice making a grimace, and wiping her shaken hand upon her pocket handkerchief.

Mrs. Vaughan gave a sigh of relief as the tall, gaunt figure was seen striding down the avenue, and then exclaimed—

"It's of no use, my dear. If I'm charitable, it

really must be after my own fashion. And really, Alice, I don't much like the idea of your turning district visitor."

"Alice turning what?" growled Stephen.

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Vaughan, "the Reverend Mr. Newman wishes us to assist him in visiting the poor—of course, under his direction; and I'm sure he seems a very good young man, and very earnest. He is getting up a fresh coal club and clothing club, and I don't know what beside. All very good things, no doubt; but he does not seem to me to have a happy way with him."

"And, pray, has he made a convert of my charming sister?" said Stephen.

"Of course he has, sir," replied that young lady, tartly; "and I'm going to— No, I'm not, mamma, dear," she continued, seeing the dismayed look her mother had put on. "I have no patience with the man; and I declare my hand feels quite damp and sticky now, after shaking hands with him."

"Come, that's cheering," said Frank. "I was about to add a postscript to the letter I'm writing to Tom Phipps, imploring him to come down and help us while we try to rescue you from a fall into all kinds of strong-minded womanisms. Why, Steve, I was looking down a perspective of the future, and seeing a little lady of our acquaintance in blue spectacles, whittle shawl, and clogs, and armed with an umbrella and a big Berlin wool worked bag full of interesting tracts and teething powders."

"Accompanied by another lady in similar costume, and of similar habits of life, named Madeline Glebeley," exclaimed Alice, interrupting him.

"Saints forbid!" cried Frank. "But there, I give up. I've registered a vow that I will never more engage in controversy with Miss Alice Vaughan. There are no laurels to be gained—nothing more agreeable than nettles. So I cry you mercy. And now, Steve, for our shooting."

"Ah, come along," said Stephen. "And I say, Alice—I mean Frank—don't you wish Tom was here?"

There was a light box on the ear for Stephen, as his sister tripped by him and out of the room; and a few minutes after, with arms shouldered, and to the unbounded delight of Bob, the young men were on their way to the wood. On the road they encountered the Squire, spittle-staff in hand, upon the summit of which he rested his chin till they came up, when he saluted them with—

"Has that parson chap gone?" And upon receiving a reply in the affirmative, rubbed his nose, saying—"I tell you what it is, Frank Henderson, if you are going to bring any of those make-home-a-nuisance ideas from college, about visiting and that sort of thing, just keep out of my way."

"Don't be alarmed," said Frank, laughing.

"No, I don't mean to be," said the old gentleman, laughing in his turn, and nodding his head. "Why didn't you bring him out, and lend him a gun?"

Stephen Vaughan had no good and sufficient reason to give, so he merely smiled and walked on, closely followed by Frank, when they passed the lane in silence, and entered the wood. But in spite of Stephen Vaughan's assumed gaiety, it was evident

that something was preying upon his mind. There had been occasional fits of coolness between the young men, but they soon passed off, from the intense desire shown to be friendly; while latterly Frank, feeling assured of the prize they both sought, had cast all jealous feeling to the winds, and was ready to sympathize with his friend, if he would accept his sympathy. They had been together for some little time that afternoon, and Frank had passed over several little slights and displays of temper that at another time might have brought on a serious quarrel. But he could pity his friend; and at last, in the depth of the wood, it was almost with a feeling of remorse that he saw Stephen lean against an oak, and then hesitating at first, but growing bolder as he went on, Frank listened, while, with half-averted face, Stephen said, in husky tones—

"Frank, old fellow, we've been good friends together for a long time, and it hurts me that anything should come between us. I did once think that we should be brothers; but that is all gone by now, and it seems that we are both running in the same track, and are to be enemies."

"But," exclaimed Frank, eagerly, "is that my seeking? You must have—"

"Stop!" cried Stephen, harshly; "hear me out. I have not much to say, but—but— There, Frank, there's my hand. I'm no speaker, and I can't say what I want; but you know what I mean. Let's have fair play," he continued, huskily. "I am no hypocrite. I tell you I love Madeline Glebeley more than ever you can. But I have heard two or three things to-day that have unsettled me. I could not speak about it when we first met, but I want you to tell me that it is all a lie—village gossip—for there is a report that you and Miss Glebeley are to be engaged."

There was some few minutes' silence in that deep woodland glade, during which Frank's brow flushed, and he felt that resentment at being questioned was taking possession of his mind. He was about to answer angrily, but his better nature prevailed, and, laying his hand upon his companion's shoulder, he slowly said—

"It is quite true, Steve!"

Stephen Vaughan started as though Frank had struck a steel blade into his breast. He wrenched himself away, and stood with vein-knotted brow and lowering looks, while the gun he held shook in his powerful grasp. But the paroxysm passed off in a few moments, and, with the dew standing upon his forehead, he turned round to speak, when rage again seemed to take possession of his heart, and clenching his disengaged hand, he hissed out—

"D—n you, Frank, this is not fair! You have half broken my poor sister's heart, and now you would rob me. But I am no weak boy—I can act as well as you; and I tell you that I will fight to the last gasp for her. Mark me, while I have life I will never give—"

"Are you mad, Steve Vaughan?" exclaimed Frank, sternly.

"I believe I am—God knows I believe I am, Frank," groaned the poor fellow, breaking down and speaking thickly. "I must be." And then he leaned his head upon his arm against an oak, and trembled

with the emotion that shook him. At last, with averted head, he said—"There, leave me now, Frank, I'm not all right. Go away, there's a good fellow; I don't want to be bad friends. I'm not myself this afternoon—and—and—there, I'm a fool, I know; but I didn't mean you to see it!"

And then, thoroughly breaking down, the stalwart fellow paced up and down the glade, as if suffering some violent and bitter pang.

Frank Henderson felt in anything but a happy frame of mind. He was hurt by the words addressed to him, and yet sorry to see his old friend's humbled condition; than have witnessed which he would rather have met his anger. But he felt helpless to offer consolation, for he knew that a woman's hand should have been the one laid upon Stephen Vaughan's shoulder—the broad shoulder now heaving with suppressed emotion. But at last he grasped him by the arm, and, turning farther into the wood, they walked slowly together down one of the deepest alleys.

It might have been five, ten, twenty minutes after, or an hour; but it was while standing together beneath a huge beech that Frank said, in a low voice—

"Steve, mine should not be the lips to talk of hopefulness to one who has suffered your loss; but we must be friends. You must bear this like a man, and as God knows I would have tried to bear it had you passed me in the race. Steve, old fellow, I would have done what you will do this night when you are alone—prayed for *her* happiness. I have used no unfair advantage. It has been between us— But, there; we are friends, are we not? They are scarce enough, and after many years' trial, we cannot afford to lightly part with them. Steve, you forgive?"

Stephen Vaughan nodded.

"From your heart?" said Frank.

Stephen nodded again; but the moment after his face changed. A wild fury seemed to come over him, and seizing his companion by the throat they wrestled together, swaying backwards and forwards, till Frank tripped, when, with an almost superhuman effort, Stephen Vaughan dashed him back, so that his head came in contact with a beech trunk, and he fell stunned and bleeding to the ground.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE CONSEQUENCES OF A TRESPASS.

IT was an undeniable fact that the lanes round Waveley supplied scraps of rustic scenery that would have given satisfaction to the most scrupulous artist. Of course, one is ready to own that it was very bad farming to leave great tall, ragged hedges, with every here and there pollards or spreading oaks. These ought all to have been cut down and turned into hard cash, and the hedges reduced to a height that would have prompted the passer-by to say they might just as well have been entirely removed. However, they were not model farmers round Waveley, and did not make a point of sending in the ploughshare right to the very edge of the ditch, and utilizing every scrap of land; and, besides, the landlords were most staunch preservers of game, for whose especial behoof covers were

needed. So the lovers of scenery—that is to say, miniature scenery, for Waveley boasted neither defile nor gorge, mountain, precipice, nor chasm—the lovers of pretty English scenery had a fine opportunity for filling their portfolios with sketches. Copse, spring, and wood; plantation, gorse land, and brake; sand-rock and high, martin-pierced bank; large double hedges, full of gnarled pollards and stumps. There were plenty of gathering places for the lordly pheasant, and temptations enough for men of the Bill Graves stamp.

But there was also plenty of temptation for the lover of nature; and when was not a light-hearted, bright-eyed maiden a lover of nature, as of everything else beautiful and good?—which is probably the reason why she leans so lovingly upon some big-whiskered he sooner or later.

Annie Newman was a lover of nature; and as her brother could not be tempted beyond the last house in the parish, nor yet in leisure hours to quit St. Thomas à Kempis, she used in despair to stroll off by herself, making numberless pretty little discoveries in her rambles. She was very girlish, though, in these solitary walks, and did all manner of unbecoming things, such as climbing gates and stiles unaided, leaping ditches to pick wild flowers, or secure specimens of nutgall, briony, or traveller's joy; while it is a fact that she one day returned to her brother's august—that is to say, her brother Augustus's presence, with a nose of a more decidedly purple hue than that of their landlady, Miss Cinques; and then, when the curate remonstrated, she tripped to the glass, and burst—

Into tears?

No. Into a hearty fit of laughter, saying—
"Oh, Gus, you should have come! There were such delicious dewberries in the deep dell!"

Well might her brother sigh, and write home that he thought it would be better for Annie if she returned to the paternal nest, as she daily grew more wild and unmanageable.

Still Annie Newman did not depart, for she began to like Waveley, in spite of an adventure which befel her one day during her wanderings—an adventure apparently of no moment in itself, but one of sufficient importance to alter the current of two human natures from the directions in which they had flowed, and to set up a ripple in the one case, and somewhat of an eddy in the other.

As it fell upon a day, Love, whose month was not always May, nor any other month in particular; for we have all known as desperate stabs to be given in the depth of winter as in the sunniest or rainiest months—well, as it fell upon a day, Love, or something else, must have decoyed Annie Newman down the crooked lane and over the gate into one of old Squire Vaughan's meadows—a particularly pretty meadow, bounded on three sides with woodland, and margined upon the fourth by the winding river, where, plashing about in the shallows, the cattle were collected beneath the pollard willows, seeking in vain for protection against the winged torments which pestered them.

It was indeed a pretty field, one well worthy of being made the subject of a sketch; for the emerald turf seemed framed, as it were, in the richly-shaded

greens of the wood—here bright and golden, and there deepening almost into black where the firs peered out; while the hedges, which formed the division between wood and field, were teeming with their ripening harvest of seed-vessel and fruity berry. It was a pleasant place for a stroll; and so thought Annie Newman, who wandered "in maiden meditation fancy free," fit presiding nymph for such a scene. She passed up one side of the field—here picking a flower, and there a berry; sometimes even to the damaging of her pretty little white fingers, for rough Briareus could not let so tempting a hand pass him without making a snatch thereat. Now it was a feathery tuft for her hedgeside bouquet which tempted the maiden to pause; or, again, one of the clustering grape-like bunches of the tendrilled briony or ebon-hued privet. Anon, some gorgeously-feathered pheasant stood with raised crest gazing at the intruder ere he startled her with the loud whirr of his wings, as he rose perpendicularly for a few yards, and then skimmed into the woody covert.

Plenty to see, plenty to admire; and the light breeze seemed to think so too, as it now and then lifted one of the dark curls descending from the little coquettish brown hat, and resting upon the rambler's shoulder—a rambler almost more dangerous to meet than one of the feline beauties of a tropic jungle—while after an encounter one always feels tempted to bless the man who invented veils!

Two sides of the wood-bounded prairie were passed, and quite a suitable spot for a woodland throne reached, in an angle where a great oak stretched forth a leafy arm over the meadow, as though in token of ownership as monarch of the fields and glades.

But there was no throne there; so Annie Newman stood gazing into the deep shade before her—listening to the low hum of the insects, and negligently allowing that creamy white parasol to rest upon her shoulder—the parasol which proved so fruitful a cause of dissension when brought out upon the first Sunday at Waveley, when Gus said his sister "ought to blush to carry so meretricious a piece of folly." Those were the very words; and I know as a fact that they brought the tears into the maiden's eyes, and caused her to put the parasol away, and walk to church without one, although the sun was blazing in her face all the way, and made the said face smart so that its owner sat through the service spoiling her nails by biting them down to the quick—a popular and very maidenly way of displaying anger and annoyance.

All at once Annie's reverie was brought to a conclusion by a loud snort just behind her; and on turning her head, to her great dismay, she found that the cattle she had last noticed standing quietly in the river, had approached in a well-ordered line which completely hemmed her in the corner, and seemed to preclude all chance of escape.

Annie Newman's first idea was that the thirty or so enemies were all bulls; and the second was that they were all mad, and that she would be gored to death; for as she backed farther into the corner, so they followed her slowly up, closer and closer, until her cheek turned pale as her parasol, only of a much prettier pallor, and her heart died within her, as she

wondered what would come next, and wished, oh, so devoutly! that the great Hercules-like fellow she had seen from her window, and at church, were by her side. It would have been some comfort, she thought, even to have had Gus, though her heart told her that he would not have been of much service.

But the maiden was wrong in her ideas—wrong, to begin with, in wishing for a big, fine-looking young man to be at her side, to the disparagement of her brother; wrong about the animals before her, for they were not bulls, neither were they mad; for they were simply a collection of heifers—sportive young maidenly cows—which Squire Vaughan had purchased at Edgeton and Ramsford markets, and then turned out to graze.

The softer sex always was gifted, or troubled, with that attribute called curiosity; and though I never felt the bumps of a heifer's head—in fact, never prosecuted my researches in that direction beyond the head of the calf, and that in a cooked condition—still it always appears that heifers are beyond all other animals troubled with a desire to know what's what. If a strange dog enters the pasture, they are after him directly, sometimes to their own discomfiture, if the dog be courageous; but in most cases to drive the intruder sneaking out of their domain with his tail between his legs—he not staying sufficiently long to satisfy the curiosity of the bevy of horned heads, which remain stretched out over hedge, fence, or gate, in the direction he has taken.

As with the dog, so with everything else which comes within the scope of the heiferine vision, and therefore it was not surprising that the Squire's cattle should be astounded at the sight of a creamy-looking hemisphere going slowly up the field on the top of a body; for neither head nor shoulders were visible. It was not therefore surprising that first one and then another of the light young creatures should elevate her caudal appendage, until it stood out in a line with the rest of the vertebræ; or, where the animal was more excited, in a perpendicular position, where it remained, while there were sundry shakings of the head, and imaginary tossings, with occasional clumsy leaps off the ground. With some of the animals an idea seemed to be prevalent that it was a gigantic turnip brought for their special delectation and use, and these were mostly disposed to close in quickly; but, judging from the expression of countenance exhibited, blank curiosity was the prevailing feeling.

So as the heifers hemmed in Annie Newman, that young lady wished—oh, so earnestly!—that the tall Hercules were by her side.

Now Annie Newman's must have been a much more highly favoured fate than that of the general run of mankind, for few among us find wishing for things of much avail; but somehow or another this young lady's desire enjoyed fruition, for just as she was coming to the conclusion that one of the most frisky of her assailants was about to impale her—so closely had it approached—she gave a long and loud cry for help, which was directly followed by a quick trampling and crashing noise in the wood behind her, and immediately after, in a sort of misty dream, Annie Newman saw a figure burst through

the hedge, and the cattle ignobly take to flight; and then, poor girl, she saw no more until, with a horribly sickly, deathly sensation upon her, she opened her eyes again, and found that she was reclining upon the grass, with her head resting upon the arm of Hercules himself, who was leaning over her with his hat off, and fanning her cheek with its wide brim.

She ought to have screamed again and jumped up, backed three yards, and then, in the tragic tones of outraged innocence, have exclaimed—

“Sir!”

But she did not; for in the faintness and thankfulness of feeling at finding herself in safety, and with him for a protector, Annie Newman could but gently close her eyes again, and sigh—feeling so happy and resigned; but directly after, a blush began to mantle in her cheek, and she thought of what Augustus would say; and again, directly after, sundry ideas of maidenly reserve, which had been driven away by the fright, returned with a rush, and, taking possession of the damsel's soul, made her get up and thank—warmly, 'tis true—her welcome visitor for his timely assistance, just as any other young lady would have done.

Now, big as he was, Stephen Vaughan did not come under the denomination of *gauche*. There was a great deal of Nature's gentleman in him; and although he would much rather have stayed upon one knee supporting that prettily shaped head, with a perfect cascade of beautiful hair flowing over his arm, while he fanned that pallid cheek—now so rosy; yet he took the proper course in a moment, and the little hand extended to him at the same time; listened to the prettily worded thanks; and then, shouldering his gun, walked by the maiden's side, taking as much notice of the heifers as though they had been flies, and only smiling and saying a few encouraging words as his companion pressed closer to him when they passed the herd.

The gate reached, Stephen came in for another treat in the helping of Annie over that obstacle; for, nimble as are young ladies in such cases when alone, it is surprising how awkward and helpless they become when in masculine company. However, Annie was assisted up the gate, and then had to jump off the top bar, Stephen landing her as easily as though she had been a child; and then there was such a pleasant stroll down the lane, for Stephen could chat upon wild bee, bird, and flower, and that, too, rather enthusiastically; but what wonder in such a case as this?

But, in fine, the gentleman received the last thanks and his *congé*, while Annie Newman tripped off with heightened colour, and soon entered Miss Cinque's mansion, feeling very naughty, and flushed, and disposed to cry—for why she could not tell, as, to her knowledge, she had done nothing wrong. But then she had been touched; there had been a big man's arm round her neck and amongst her curls; and, as she stood before the glass in her little room arranging those curls, she tugged at them with the comb, and brushed them viciously. She wetted her cheeks with cold water again and again, and let the soft piece of sponge kiss them for long enough; but they only looked worse, and then they flushed deeper in hue; for she remembered all at once how she had

wished for Hercules the Strong, and how he had come directly.

The tempest was terrible, and she threw herself down upon her knees by the bedside, and leaned her forehead against the cool pillow.

But then he was so like an old Saxon hero, and looked so handsome and sympathising when she first opened her eyes, and—and— But how dared he to touch her? And then the little cheeks flamed up again, and the dark eyes flashed dreadfully. It was sacrilege—perfect sacrilege; and at last, in her anger, the maiden had a good cry—a proceeding which terminated in the eyes growing as red about the lids as the cheeks were already, and in such a headache that the tea had but little effect, even when partaken of in such soothing society as that of her brother.

Seeing the Real.

"I HAVE quite made up my mind, Frank, at last. I'm tired to death of London; balls are a bore, and even the opera— Oh! I hate and detest the London season. I am going to the East."

The words were spoken by a young fellow of twenty-two, who was dining with some friends at a City restaurant. He was not a bad-looking specimen of the rising generation, but rather spoilt by the languid manner and drawl so much affected by the fashionable young men of the present day.

"How many hundreds of times have you come to that decision before, since the war began?" asked the one addressed, laughing.

"Ah, my dear boy, but I mean it this time. I do, indeed."

"What's that, Fwed?" inquired a tall youth with an eyeglass. "You talking about going to Turkey? What's the reason of that?"

"Fair one been cruel?" asked another.

"Chaff away," said Fred Hinton, colouring. "But I don't believe any of you have spirit enough to do it."

"Perhaps not; but we don't know that you have yet."

"You shall see. I am really off next week. Frank, will you go with me?"

"Can't, for several reasons," answered his friend.

"I would if I could, upon my word."

"Do you mean it, weally and twuly, Hinton?" drawled the gentleman with the eyeglass.

"I do."

"I'll join you, then."

"You will?" exclaimed two or three at once, while Fred Hinton burst out laughing.

"That is rich! I should like to see you handle a sword, Cobbett."

"I'm a volunteer, Fwed," was the reply, in an injured tone. "I think I know as much about it as you do."

There was a roar of laughter, at which the young fellow addressed as Cobbett looked rather confused, and said no more; but the ensuing week, he and Fred Hinton, having obtained the necessary letters of recommendation to the Porte, started for the East. In two months they found themselves shut up in Plevna with Osman Pacha, waiting for some-

thing to turn up. They had donned the fez and tunic, and employed their spare time in picking up the language. They were stationed in different battalions, and had not been there a week before they lost sight of each other. The distant roar of the cannon was to be heard almost continually, and clouds of smoke were always rising from the Turkish position outside Plevna; but though Fred Hinton was longing to be in action, he had to wait as patiently as he could for his turn.

At last the news came that the battalion in which he was serving as lieutenant was ordered out to the trenches, to help to defend one of the redoubts, which it was expected that the enemy would attempt to take in the course of the day. The Russians were concentrating their fire on this redoubt with the intention of making it untenable, but as yet unsuccessfully. Their shells, however, were doing their work of destruction, though slowly; and Fred Hinton, as they marched out of the town, had his first lesson in the horrors of war. They met numbers of wounded being carried back, and groans and cries made themselves heard whenever there was a temporary lull in the roar of the guns. The Turks kept a steady return fire at the Russian positions, but, as far as they could see, without much effect. The day was very cold, with a piercing east wind, and a drizzling rain that fell continually added to their discomfort. But the young Englishman was too excited with the prospect of immediate action to pay much heed to this. They were soon in one of the outer trenches, and Fred's men were in a very few minutes engaged in throwing up earth to fill up the gabions where the enemy's shell had made breaches; and he stopped now and then, horror-stricken, as a shriek of agony from near him struck on his ear. But by degrees he got used to it, and was apparently as unmoved as his companions. It was soon evident that the enemy were approaching, though the clouds of smoke, kept down by the heavy atmosphere, rendered it almost impossible to see any distance in advance. The roar of the guns became louder, and for a minute the young lieutenant was confused by the deafening sounds, the horror of hearing constant cries of agony, and seeing man after man fall, shot through, mutilated, or shattered by a bursting shell. The fighting soon raged fiercely, and Fred cheered on his little company, growing less each minute, while the Russians were one moment in the trenches, apparently carrying all before them, and then driven back by the obstinate, determined fighting of the Turks, leaving heaps of wounded and dying as they went. There was smoke everywhere, the air was full of shrieks, groans, mingled with triumphant shouting and cheers, while the ground streamed with blood; and yet the young Englishman, who at one time would have shuddered with horror at the bare account of one of these battles, was now so thoroughly roused to the wild excitement and fury of war that he waved his sword and cheered his men on, paying no more heed to the bodies that strewed the ground, to be trampled on and stumbled over, than if they had been so many dead leaves.

The enemy for a little while seemed to be repulsed, but soon came on again more fiercely than

before, and the officer Fred was under was killed by a shell bursting close to him, which laid some twenty poor fellows on the ground. In consequence of this, the men began to give way, and the trench would quickly have been deserted, but Fred Hinton, taking in the state of the case, snatched up his leader's telescope, and assumed the command. The Turks, encouraged by his daring, obeyed his shouts to them to follow, and rallying, closed round, as he dashed, sword in hand, and began anew the terrible contest. One Russian after another fell by his strokes, and his men, following his example, fought so obstinately, that the enemy were beaten back temporarily, and would have had to retire, but that reinforcements arrived, and the struggle raged more fiercely than before. Again the young officer cheered on his men by his example; but this time the odds were against him, and, in spite of all his efforts, he found himself beaten back. More than one gun-carriage in the trench was shattered, and the artillerymen had seized spades, and were endeavouring to repair the breaches in the earthworks, stopping now and then to look back, in the hope that assistance might be coming. Hinton gave them a word or two of encouragement, and then once more his men fired desperately. But he was gradually being driven out of the redoubt, and for a couple of hours there was a desperate attempt to keep that position. However, it was in vain; the heavy fire of the enemy rendered it impossible to hold it any longer, and it was at last unwillingly relinquished, while the remnant of Fred's company had to retreat to another stand-point. This ended the fighting for that day.

Thoroughly exhausted, Fred slept on the ground that night with a sheepskin rug wrapped round him; while the earthworks were repaired under cover of the darkness, and preparations were being made for the recapture of the redoubt on the morrow. He awoke at dawn, to take part in the preparations; and, after a hearty meal, felt ready for anything. The Turks, however, all assembled for prayers before beginning the day's work, and the young man watched the ceremony with some curiosity. It has been so often described that we will not enter into an account of it here. When it was concluded the battalions were formed, and in an hour Fred Hinton was one of the officers who began the attack on the redoubt. It was the same thing over again—repulse and counter-repulsé. One minute one side had the advantage, the next the other. The same smoke and roar; bursting of shells, followed by shrieks and groans; the wounded and dead lying in heaps, friend and foe mingled, yet glaring hate at each other while dying; the ground slippery with blood, and encumbered with dead, and the living dashing forward over their bodies to cut each other down, at each cut or thrust leaving some widow and orphan far away destitute; the wild haggard faces, mud-besmeared, clothes torn and stained with blood; the eyes bloodshot, yet glittering with that fire with which all men are inspired in the heat of battle, when lives are as nothing in the fierce rage of their hearts. Fred Hinton, as he led the way, the Russians falling back before him, though by nature a generous and humane young fellow enough, now

felt nothing but the one desire, to drive the enemy back, to trample on them, hew them down—anything for victory. And, horrible as it sounds and is, it is but natural; for had he felt otherwise, he would have been a coward.

The enemy had been prepared for this furious onslaught. For three long hours the struggle continued without much advantage being gained on either side. The carnage was fearful. Reinforcements arrived from both sides; but the Russians had the disadvantage that the regiment coming to their aid had to pass through the fire from the other redoubts, and was in consequence thinned before arriving.

At last the Turks began to give way once more. Fred Hinton felt all his endeavours useless. He still continued to cheer his men forward, but the numbers that fell obliged him to retreat a little; and his fire and eagerness changed to a feeling of savage obstinacy. As yet he was perfectly unhurt, while half of his men had fallen; but he was getting somewhat exhausted, as were the remainder of his followers. He was being gradually driven back, when he was suddenly reinforced from the rear, and the contest again grew desperate. Forward again, and the enemy beginning to give way, when, turning to see who it was fighting so gallantly by his side, he recognized Philip Cobbett, so changed from the languid young fop that he hardly knew him. His fez had fallen off; his face was animated and eager; while his right arm hung by his side useless, and he held his sword in his left hand.

"Come on, Fred," he shouted; "we'll drive the beggars out yet."

And Hinton, his failing energy coming back, sprang forward again; when he felt a sudden sharp pain and fell on his face, while dozens of feet trampled over him, and he recollected no more.

When he came to himself, he was lying on one of a row of beds occupied by a great many other sufferers, his right shoulder bandaged up, and his left arm, while he felt that he was covered with bruises. It was a long, narrow room in which he was lying; the beds were only a yard apart, and the floor was of red bricks, with a little straw scattered about. He felt faint and cramped; but the least movement caused him such pain that he lay quite still and waited. He could hear the dull, distant roar of guns; beside that, and an occasional groan from one of the wounded men, there was no sound to be heard.

After what seemed an interminable length of time, there was a light footstep and the rustle of a dress at the farther end of the room, and slightly turning his head, he saw that it was a nurse, who was bending over each man in turn, and giving him something to drink.

Would she never come to him? He was dying of thirst, and she spent so long by each bed. At last! She bent over him, raised his head, and he took a long draught of wine and water, which seemed to give him new life. She was a fair, pleasant-faced Englishwoman of about thirty, with large, cool hands, whose touch was grateful to many a feverish, hot brow. She arranged his bandages, straightened his pillow, and did him good in a dozen ways by her

light touch here and there. Before passing on to the next bed, she looked at him attentively.

"You are English?" she asked, after scrutinizing his features.

"Yes," he answered. "Am I in a hospital in Plevna?"

"Certainly you are."

"How long shall I have to lie here?"

"That depends. Perhaps three weeks, perhaps six. It is impossible to tell at present."

"Do you know anything about the result—" he began.

But she stopped him.

"I cannot stop to talk, there are so many to attend to. Lie still for the present. I shall be here again."

And she went to the next patient.

When Philip Cobbett led the newly arrived company on to aid in the attempt to drive the Russians from the redoubt, he did not see his friend fall, and only missing him from his side some minutes later, thought he might have gone to the rear. So, being comparatively fresh himself, he brought his men on with a rush, and made so furious an onslaught that the enemy began to give way at once.

"Come on! Forward!" he shouted to his men, in English, being too excited to remember that they would not understand, and all the Arabic going out of his head.

But the tone was sufficient. The gallant young officer, cheering them forward, with his right arm helpless at his side, might have led them wherever he chose, though he was of a different nation; for a soldier always worships courage and daring, and Cobbett had proved his more than once that day. The men rushed forward, and fought obstinately, bayonet to bayonet, with the Russians, until at last the latter were driven from the position, and the Turks were once more in undisputed possession of the redoubt. One battalion—or rather what was left of it—followed the enemy to a little distance, but Cobbett's company remained behind, while he looked about for his friend. He began to be afraid, as he was not to be seen, that he must be wounded or killed; and accordingly directing his eyes to the heaps of dead and dying, became aware of what his men were doing—despatching the wounded Russians. He gave an exclamation of horror, and commanded them to desist, in their own language, which they did very unwillingly, and with a great deal of grumbling.

"You shall not do that while I can prevent it, you beasts," he muttered, as he knelt down beside a wounded man, one of the enemy, and put him into an easier position. "Get me some water for this poor fellow," he cried, authoritatively.

And the command was obeyed, the men looking on with a peculiar smile as Philip let the Russian drink. Rising to his feet, the young officer then gave orders for the wounded to be carried into shelter, which orders were being put into execution, when the superior officer returned from the pursuit. The latter immediately gave orders for the wounded of the enemy to be finished off. Cobbett remonstrated, pleaded, appealed, but in vain; the Turkish officer smiled at his ignorance, and let his

men go on with the brutal work of destruction, when the young Englishman fled, horror-stricken and shuddering, with the groans and cries ringing in his ears.

He found his way back into the town after a while, and wandered about, looking for a doctor to attend to his arm, which was frightfully painful now that the excitement was over. After an hour's wandering, he found an ambulance, and had his arm set; for it had been broken. The surgeon strongly advised his going into hospital and lying still for some days, but Cobbett refused stoutly.

"I should be ten times worse if I were obliged to lie in one of those beds, and listen to the moans of the poor shattered wretches around me," he said. "No, I will walk about as long as I can. Besides, I want to look for my friend. He might go home without me while I was lying there."

But we cannot arrange these things for ourselves. The next morning he was down with the fever, in a hospital only just across the road from where Fred Hinton lay; while each of them was wondering whether the other was alive or dead.

A fortnight later, and Fred was still in the hospital. He had had a severe time of it, and was just beginning to get better. There were more beds than there had been at first, and there was only a space of two feet between them now. The visits of the nurses and surgeon, on the contrary, were fewer and farther between.

When the nurse came to Fred on the day in question, he made up his mind to ask her the question that had long trembled on his lips, but which in his weak state he had been afraid to put, lest the answer should be what he dreaded. It was the same woman who had been there when he first entered the place. When he had drunk the soup she brought him, and made an ineffectual attempt to eat a piece of bread, he asked as she was going—

"Is there anywhere here in Plevna an Englishman, young and good-looking?"

"Yes," she answered readily, "there is such a one in the hospital opposite this, across the road."

"What is he like?" asked the young man, eagerly.

"Fair, with light hair and blue eyes. His name is Philip Cobbett."

"Is he very bad? What is the matter with him?"

"Fever. He will soon be better, I hope. Now, I will not stop to hear any more. You are doing yourself harm by talking."

"Tell him I am here," said Fred, in rather a faint voice, "and that I am doing well."

The nurse nodded, and left him, for there were many there who needed her care far more than he did.

Another week passed away, and yet another, while Fred was getting slowly better—very slowly, and was able to sit up for awhile occasionally; when one fine morning, when the autumn sun was brighter than it had been for some time, a thin, pale, gaunt-looking young man, walking with a stick, came with the nurse into the hospital, and followed her past the beds with his eyes on the ground, as though dreading to look at their occupants, until

they reached the pallet on which Fred lay half asleep. He opened his eyes as they approached, and, raising himself into a sitting posture, stared at Phil with a look of dismay. The latter sat down on the side of the bed, and the nurse left them to themselves. For a few minutes they looked at each other in silence, and then Cobbett burst out laughing.

"Well, Fred," said he, "I think we had better have stayed at home, don't you?"

Fred groaned.

"Phil, you *are* altered. And I brought you. It was my doing."

"Never mind, old chap!" said Cobbett. "We'll be off home again as soon as you are well enough."

And in less than a fortnight later they were on their way home. Neither of them is likely to forget, in a hurry, seeing real work with the Turks in Plevna.

Under the Yellow Flag.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XII.

"THE yaller rascal!" said Timkin to me, confidentially, "that was all because they cut off his tail; and I says to my mate, Joe Barr, only this here werry morning, 'It's a pity, Joe, as they didn't cut off his head as well.' But come, I say, sir, this here won't do; you must cheer up and hold up, and take a pull at a rope like the rest of us. What's the good o' pulling a long face? Look at that there t'other passenger, Master Grum, and your bright little blossom of a wife, how they hold up. We shall be all right yet. The skipper and a lot of us is a-going to make a survey o' the place this morning; so, what do you say, s'pose you make one? Hard work's the thing to kill care."

The man's words were well meant, but they seemed like a knife plunged into my breast; for in my weak madness it seemed that everything fitted together to prove the correctness of my suspicions. Else why should the rough sailor couple those two names together? This remark I had heard, but how many others, innocent and the contrary, had not reached my ears. I felt sure that the finger of scorn must be pointed at me by some; and it seemed to me that I must be daily growing into an object of pity to the better thinking, and of derision to the others.

These thoughts came upon me on the morning after the hurricane, as I stood aloof watching the efforts made by others, Paul Graham prominent amongst the rest, for the alleviation of the misery around. My heart kept telling me to follow the big sailor's advice, but it seemed impossible for me to do so; and I gave every opportunity to the man I called my destroyer to stand at advantage, while I sullenly gave place.

How could I go with the exploring party, leaving him there? I asked myself. But the question was not left for me to decide.

"We must have some organization, gentlemen," said Captain Black, who seemed, so Timkin said, to be made of such good metal, that the more he was

rubbed the more he shone. "I must treat you all as equals now, and passengers must work man for man with the crew. In a state of panic like this, we must have no distinctions."

"Hooray!" shouted Timkin.

And the men cheered, a hearty "Hurrah!" coming also from the passengers, headed by Mr. Stayman himself, who had actually that morning been afoot hours collecting specimens of the botany of the island, but who was in sore trouble because he did not know its name.

"Well, gentlemen, and friends all, it seems to me that the sooner we look our difficulties in the face the better," continued the captain. "I shall be glad to hear any propositions from other brains, but I will first give my ideas, and they are these: This morning shall be devoted to an expeditionary party, who shall carefully examine the island as far as it seems necessary, so as to let us know its resources; the others the while doing what they can to put things in order, and preserve our provisions from further damage. Then I propose that the remaining boat should be got ready, lots drawn for a crew to man her, and that she should be sent out in search of help, while the rest wait on patiently, and in good hope for the rescue that must come. I say all this in the full belief that we are upon an island, for, after carefully looking round, as well as I can make out, that is the case, and the land looming in the distance is apparently only a smaller one."

"But where are we, captain?" exclaimed Mr. Stayman.

"I cannot tell you for certain, sir, but I have my suspicions. And now, friends, what are we to do? Has any one anything better to propose?"

"Yes," shouted a gruff voice, which I recognized as that of the big sailor.

"Well?" said Captain Black.

"Some on us thinks," said Timkin, sheepishly, "as somethin' oughter be built up as a shade afore the sun gets any stronger, or the ladies 'll all be havin' o' the ager."

There was a faint smile on some lips, but more than one eye was moistened by a tear as the rough sailor's proposal was immediately acted upon; and not before it was needed, for the sun had already begun to beat down fiercely upon the sand, licking up the moisture, and drying rapidly the garments soaked by the heavy rain of the previous night.

"You will join us, Mr. Leslie?" said the captain, as the exploring party was preparing to start.

I hesitated, and drew back; for at that moment my eye lighted upon Graham, who was busily finishing the lashing of a rope which supported our tent-pole.

I did not see him look up; in fact, any one could hardly have imagined that he had heard the captain's words; but he must have divined my thoughts, for, rising slowly, and as if all had been pre-arranged, he crossed over to where the party were mustered, just encountering my gaze for an instant as he took his place calmly, and, as I interpreted it, insolently, to disarm my suspicions.

I had no cause for hesitation now, and, joining the ranks, we started, each of us being armed as well as the circumstances would permit.

It was night before we returned, to find all well at the little camp, our long walk of many weary miles having been but a repetition of that which some of the party had taken immediately on our landing, the interior of the island being entirely forest, with an occasional lake of fresh water, containing plenty of duck of various kinds. There were few fruits; cocoa-nuts there were, but not in abundance; and altogether we had to come to the conclusion that though thirty or forty people might manage to subsist there for some three or four months, it could only be by strict economy and industry.

But there was one little scrap of good news for us when we returned to the shore, where our desolate party anxiously awaited us. Timkin, who at the last moment had been, to his great disgust, ordered to remain behind, had been contriving a fishing line with some yarn and one of the ladies' hair pins, bending it in a wavy fashion, and beating out the points flat upon a stone to compensate for want of bait. With this simple contrivance he had managed, from the edge of a rock, to catch half a dozen fair-sized fish, whose greatest value to us now lay in the fact that they showed a means of sustenance to supplement what had already been discovered.

We were all weary; but, deciding that there was no time to be lost, the captain had some provisions served round, and then, summoning help, proceeded to inspect the boat left to us.

"I had hoped that we should have seen the other cast ashore," he said; "and to-morrow morning we will have it sought for in the other direction. But even if it is found, I don't think it would be wise to do more than send out a party in search of assistance; for it is impossible we could take all, and it is not likely we could always encounter such weather as we had on our way here."

So the sand was scraped out of the boat, a portion of the provisions stored in her; water casks were filled from a pool of crystal clearness a hundred yards inland, oars were laid ready, and nothing was wanting but one of the sails and the little mast now forming part of the tent sheltering the women of the party.

"I think that will do for to-night," said Captain Black. "To-morrow we will send out a party."

CHAPTER XIII.

THAT night, save the watch, the whole party slept the sleep of utter exhaustion. I awoke once, to find the moon shining brilliantly upon the little tent which protected the females. I was wet with the dew that fell, but not cold, for the night was soft and balmy. About fifty yards from where I was, I could make out two figures gazing seaward, one of whom towered above the other; and their voices reached me in a low murmur. Otherwise there was a profound silence, save now and then the softened murmur of the sea, as it rolled gently into the little bay, and broke rippling upon the sands. I turned to look around, to see sleepers stretched in various positions, some with hidden face, others with features exposed to the full light of the moonbeams. There, on one side of where I had lain, slept Captain Black, his hand clenched, and a few low muttered words falling at times from his lips;

while next to him—my heart felt as if something clutched it as I looked—was Paul Graham, his arm beneath his head, and his fair hair glistening in the moonlight, which bathed his face. His sleep seemed calm and light, as that of a child; and I stood close beside him, with knitted brow, feeling how easy it would be to crush out the life from his beating heart, or with one of the huge boulders on the beach at hand, with one blow to destroy the beauty of his fair, false, handsome, girlish face, and gratify my hatred at the same time.

But would it gratify me? I asked myself. And then I listened, for his lips were parted, and he began to mutter in his sleep incoherent words that I could hardly catch; and then the blood seemed to dart to my brain and make it swim, and my eyes dimmed, as my temples throbbed with a fierce pain.

The dimness that seemed to obscure my sight was not such as to prevent me from seeing a gentle smile ripple over his face as I bent nearer, nor did the throb, throb of my beating pulse, plainly as I could hear them, drown now the babbling of his lips as I listened to them pronouncing the name of my wife—of the woman whom but a few days before I had sworn to love and cherish, but whom I now felt to hate as bitterly as I did the man lying so peacefully at my feet.

I stooped lower and lower to catch his last words, so that my head half-shaded his face, leaving the other half bright and fair to see; but the smile slowly faded out, the lips grew rigid, there was a trembling and twitching in the nerves of his countenance, his forehead grew wrinkled, and, more than once, a heavy sigh of oppression rose from his breast. It was as though he felt that evil was nigh, that at any moment a fierce pair of hands might clutch him by the throat; and instinctively his eyes unclosed, gazed full in mine vacantly for a few moments, then, with the light of understanding brightening them, and in a quiet, self-sustained way, he half rose upon his elbow, to whisper—

"Is there danger?"

"Yes," I said, bitterly, as I turned away and threw myself down again in my place, trying in vain for the oblivion that might ease my tortured heart for awhile.

"Always the same—always the same," I thought. "Every word and act confirms it; and if I could gaze upon the other false face, I should find that wreathed in smiles, and hear a name pronounced that was not mine."

In a few moments I heard Graham rise; then he stood listening, before walking down to where the watch was set, to whom he stood talking for a little while, before returning to lie down once more in his place.

Sleep came to me no more that night, and I was afoot just as Captain Black sprang to his feet, and summoned several of the men to assist in launching the boat. This was not performed without some difficulty, the tide being low, and still retreating; but she was got down through the heavy sand at last, and a man left in her to keep her afloat.

By this time the women had prepared breakfast, one and all vying in their endeavours to do every-

thing possible to alleviate the discomfort and misery of our position.

Then Captain Black numbered the people under his charge, to find them fifty-four, all told; and proposed that lots should be drawn to decide who should go on the perilous voyage in quest of help.

"I wish to do all things fairly," said he, "and to satisfy all; and therefore I have decided, that though it might be better to send a boat manned entirely by sailors, yet, that all should have a fair chance of escape, she should have a crew half sailors and half passengers, and take besides a fair proportion of women."

There was a round of cheering at this proposition; and arrangements having been made, the first step was to decide who should command the boat, and the lots—two—were thrown into a hat.

"It must lie, of course, between you two," said Captain Black, addressing Mr. Thomas and the second mate. "My duty is to stay with the larger party."

And, after a little hesitation, the lots were drawn, and Mr. Thomas had to take the command, the second mate being hardly able to conceal his disappointment at being excluded.

For it was evident that there was an intense desire to get away from the barren island, and a long and perilous boat voyage was desired by the majority as being far preferable to the enforced inaction of waiting there for the succour that might never come.

"Now for a crew," said the captain; "sailors first."

And then ten men came forward, moved apparently, one and all, by an unconquerable aversion to being the first man, and shouldering and pushing one another in an intensely ridiculous fashion.

"Where's Timkin?"

And a growl came from the rear.

"Here he is."

And upon looking in the direction of the sound, there was the huge fellow, lying upon his face on the sand, and kicking up his heels like some great idle schoolboy.

"Come forward," said the captain.

"Not I!" growled Timkin; "I'm a mutineer, I am, and I shan't go."

The captain angrily protested and ordered; but the big fellow remained firm, and at last one-half the sailors were told off.

"Now for the passengers," said Captain Black. "Five married men are to be chosen, and they will, of course, take their wives."

I was undecided as to whether it would be better to go or stay; but I was in no humour for practising self-denial, and I drew with the rest, to find that my paper was a blank. My eyes met Graham's, and I fancied that there was a look of pleasure in his as he learned that my lot was to stay ashore.

The married men and their wives were now standing aside, the turn of the single passengers came, when Graham stepped up to the captain's side, and whispered with him for a few moments, as if trying to persuade him to something; but he said aloud, in reply—

"Mr. Graham, I thank you heartily; but the suc-

cess of all our efforts must depend upon discipline. We have had one man break through rule this morning; I cannot submit to another. Draw your lot in with the others."

I watched him narrowly as he stepped up to the hat, and saw his lip quiver and his hand tremble as he drew a paper from the others, and then stood, afraid to look at it.

"Your paper, Mr. Graham," said the captain, firmly.

"Blank!" exclaimed he, joyfully.

And the next moment Captain Black and he stood, hand joined in hand, looking in one another's eyes before the party on the shore; while, with lowering brow, I watched it all, feeling more bitter and angered and degraded in my own eyes than ever. I could have torn away from the beach, in my mad fury, and rushed into the woods to try and hide my misery from the sight of man; but I knew it was impossible, and, obeying a summons, I went to help to carry down a few more necessaries. The captain then stood giving instructions to Mr. Thomas for a few minutes, after which there was an affectionate leave-taking on all sides, men and women walking down into the water to say farewell, and clinging to each other to the last.

Then the sail was hoisted, filled; the little boat careened over, and then rose on a gentle wave, glided down into the slight hollow beyond, plunged up the next, and, gathering speed each moment, soon reached the opening of the bay, and dashed through a little rough water, followed by a ringing cheer from all on the beach, every woman's shrill voice joining in. Then it was repeated from the boat, again and again, each time becoming fainter; and then it was that the feeling of our solitary position fell upon all, and we felt how that frail boat had seemed like the one link that had connected us with the civilized world—a link now broken, at all events for the present, perhaps for ever.

I stood gazing after it for awhile, till I was aroused by the captain's voice, as he stood there, hat in hand.

"God speed her, and bring deliverance!" he said, in a choking voice. "Give her your prayers, one and all; for she has gone upon a perilous journey."

There was the sound of sobbing then from some of the women; and I moved away, watching the boat as she lightly glided over the waves in the bright sunshine, looking so light, and frail, and gay, with her white sail, that, as from time to time a handkerchief was waved on board, it seemed as if they had only departed on a pleasant trip, and not to sail at even chances right into the jaws of death.

I was glad to get away from the desolate-looking party, and wandered about for awhile amongst the trees, hardly knowing or caring where I went, when I stopped short upon rounding some low bushes, for a choking sob fell upon my ear, and then the gentle sound of a woman's voice, as if whispering consolation. I could not retire, for my step had already been heard; and I stood irresolute and surprised, to find that the staunch, firm captain was before me, sobbing like a child, while his wife was trying to whisper comfort.

"Don't shrink back, Mr. Leslie," he said, smiling sadly as he offered his hand. "It was only a fit of weakness I came into the woods to hide. The bow has been strung so tightly of late, that it felt as though it must snap; but a little weakness and wifely consolation do one no end of good at times. Don't you find it so?"

My brow knit, as my eye encountered Mrs. Black's meaning glance; and, after a few words, I hurried away, wishing that I could have been on board the little vessel that was soon to be but a speck upon the horizon, racing over the waves and away from my thoughts, that hour after hour seemed to grow more unbearable.

CHAPTER XIV.

DURING the next few days our time was pretty well employed in trying to make some better arrangements for a sleeping-place for the women, it being considered quite possible that a couple of months might elapse before help was brought—"even if it came at all," growled Timkin to himself. Trees were cut down, a space cleared, and our one hatchet hardly put to it to fulfil the arduous work required in cutting, splitting, and preparing. But, one way and another, a rough brushwood shed was contrived for the men, and another for the women, the latter being lined with what little canvas we had. Then incursions were made into the interior in search of provisions—such fruit as the island afforded; shell fish were collected; more lines made by Timkin, and a fair quantity of prey captured by the passengers, Mr. Stayman proving himself quite an expert angler, and being always most successful in his choice of baits. A few ducks were shot, and then our powder was at an end, while our attempt at making a decoy was not attended with much success.

But Captain Black was a philosopher, and, acting upon the principle that the best way of keeping the party in his charge in health and spirits was to keep them busy, he was always starting parties off in pursuit of something, or designing some little improvement to our arrangements. Expeditions were now formed, too, for thoroughly exploring the island; and it was found that a small bay on the opposite side was the only place where a landing could have been effected.

Days, weeks, glided by, and no repetition of the tempest came. Watch was kept, night and day, and once a sail was seen in the distance, sending hope into every heart; but disappointment came with the evening, the vessel had passed out of sight, and the sobs of the women sent each man to his rest that night with an aching heart.

Turn and turn each man had to act as the watch, which was kept up for friends and enemies, though of the latter we had little fear, since our island was, save by ourselves, uninhabited, and so far we had not encountered even a noxious reptile.

I had the first watch one dark night, the moon not being due for some time, when, walking thoughtfully up and down upon the beach, wondering how all this was to end, I saw a couple of figures pass between me and the sea, and then make for the wood behind where I stood.

Burglars and their Doings.

IN the *Times* the other day we read that "St. George's Garrison Church at Woolwich was entered by thieves on Sunday night or early on Monday morning. The entrance was effected by cutting the leaden frame and removing a number of panes of glass from the window facing the Army Service Corps Barracks, one of the most conspicuous in the building, and the only window in the church which is not composed of stained glass. The thieves first proceeded to break open the alms-boxes and to abstract their contents, which, however, were very little, as the boxes had recently been emptied by the secretary; they then entered the vestry, and attempted to break open one of Chubb's safes, but, although they succeeded in wrenching off a portion of the lock, the safe was proof against them."

This is a particularly interesting fact just at the present time when the papers are made startling with the regular autumnal notices of attempts and robberies in all parts of the country, and one is driven to declare that when it is possible to provide the means for defying the burglar and resisting that most admirable friend and fatal enemy fire, every one is to blame who loses by one or the other.

These remarks are consequent upon a visit to the safe manufactory of the well-known firm of Chubb, a name which, like that of Bramah during the past generation, is quite a household word. Chubb's locks, Chubb's keys, Chubb's safes are known throughout the world, while, in connection with the latter, there is a modesty about this firm that should attract purchasers, for while others announce fireproof safes, Chubb's term theirs fire and burglar resisting. This gives confidence to the buyer, who immediately concludes that everything possible to procure security has been done, while should any more than usually enterprising person penetrate to the works in Glengall-road and attune his ears to hear the shrieking of tortured iron and steel while it is being hammered, bored, planed, and treated generally as if it had no more hardness than a piece of soap, he will learn how iron is hardened and fitted with the most ingenious regard to strength, how steel is made so adamant that the most cunning burglars' tools turn from it with blunted edge; while locks of such design, hinges of so peculiar a pattern, and doors that fit so closely that it seems as if they were never meant to open again, are contrived to set at naught the doings of fire and thief, be the former never so fierce, the latter never so cunning, persevering, and armed with tools. This is no empty assertion, for severe test after test has been applied, and all of the most ingenious that could be devised. To look at many of the safes being made, they are simple in the extreme, but they are monuments of strength, and their weight as compared to their size is astounding. Much of this weight is, however, consequent upon the safe being double walled throughout, while a fire-resisting composition largely enters into the manufacture. Small as are many of those safes evidently intended for building into walls, there are others which, though safes, bear quite another name, being, in fact, strong rooms into which on entering the visitor finds safe within safe, so to speak, and begins

to shudder as he calls to mind the iron room of romance that grew smaller and smaller day by day till its walls, floor, and ceiling came together and crushed the prisoner. One of Chubb's strong rooms would not do this, but it would be awkward for the person inclosed in such an iron sarcophagus if the key were lost, for it would probably puzzle the maker even to force an entrance into his own work. Talking of keys, there is a curious fact in connection with the locks of these safes, that one little key sets in motion perhaps twelve bolts which shoot into sockets at the top, bottom, and sides of the door of entry.

Any one interested in the matter of the protection of valuables from fire and thieves, however, would do well to read the little work written by Mr. George Hayter Chubb, for it is a mine of interesting matter, evidently the collection of a man who has devoted years to the study of how to resist the sieges laid to property by these two enemies. The various chapters on locks and keys, the art of burglary, safes against thieves, strong rooms, fireproof buildings, and the danger of fire, are all well worth reading, containing as they do facts of which the everyday public are in utter ignorance.

With respect to the use of safes containing coin, and the size necessary, "it may be of use to add a few particulars respecting the amount of coin that can be stowed in a certain space, in order that it may be easily calculated how much any safe will hold. The Bank of England reckoning for the room required to stow away gold coin in bags is 79 cubic inches to £1,000. One cubic foot will contain no less than £21,875. In order to allow a slight margin, and to be on the right side, it may be considered that 80 cubic inches will contain £1,000 in bags of sovereigns.

"For silver coin the Bank reckoning is that 157 cubic inches will hold £100, and that one cubic foot will hold £1,235 in bags. To allow a margin as before, it may be said that 160 cubic inches contain £100 in silver coin."

In illustration of the necessity for great care, good safes and locks, Mr. Chubb gives the following interesting account of a bank robbery in Kent, in which a very ingenious plan was adopted by the robbers to prevent the opening of a safe after the commission of the theft:—

"Many years ago there was a bank robbery at a town in Kent, effected as follows:—Two respectable-looking and well-behaved men went to the principal inn of the town, and informed the landlord their object was to look out for and purchase a small estate in the neighbourhood. They stopped there for nearly three months, taking frequent drives in their gig; lived well and paid well; and at length took leave one market-day between twelve and one o'clock, much to the regret of the landlord, who felt very sorry to lose such unexceptionable customers.

"These men were thieves, and at a few moments past one o'clock that very day robbed the bank of nearly £5,000.

"The banking office was the ground floor of a house in the Market-square; and the manager never left the cash there at night, but always took it to his

own residence near by. He was accustomed, however, with the clerk, to be absent from one till two o'clock in the day at his dinner, during which time the money was put into the safe and the premises locked up.

"It appeared that all the arrangements of the business were perfectly ascertained and understood by the two sojourners at the hotel, and that the necessary impressions of the locks had been taken on various nights, and the false keys made.

"On the day in question the gig was taken just outside the town. One of the men went back, and, in mid-day, unlocked the street and internal doors, opened the safe, took out the money, and then the two set off to London with their booty, and got the notes cashed the same afternoon. After locking the safe, the burglars slipped a small ring over the key-pin of the lock, so that when the manager, on his return from dinner, tried to open it with its proper key, the key would not enter. A smith was sent for, and it was four hours before the safe was opened—too late, of course."

It is almost needless to add that with the modern safes and locks of this firm such a robbery could not have taken place.

The Cats' Triumph.

ROBINSON'S back-yard has always been a great rendezvous for cats. Nightly from forty to seventy-five of the feline tribe were wont to assemble there, and talk politics for hours at a stretch. And while the cats wrangled outside, Robinson would lie awake inside, and think awful thoughts, and wonder what cats were made for.

Robinson has even been known to arise from his peaceful couch "in the dead waste and middle of the night," and lean far out of his chamber window, and fiercely hurl anathemas, his boots, and various articles of furniture in the direction of the disturbers of his dreams.

This was before the advent of the "cat-teaser."

As soon as this spiky defensive and feline offenceive invention was patented and brought to public notice, Robinson saw that it was just the thing required. So he rushed out and ordered the "teaser" man to bring over his tools, and rig up the back-yard fence in the latest approved cat-proof style. The man came and put a double row of the "teaser" the whole length of the fence, received his money for the job, and departed assuring Mr. Robinson that no mortal cat could ever enter that yard again except by coming over the roof of the house.

For three nights thereafter, Mr. R. slept the sound and refreshing sleep of the just man.

But on the fourth night, about 12.37, Robinson was suddenly awakened by a howling in the back yard.

It was the old familiar music, for the cats had somehow run the blockade.

Interspersed with feline strains, Robinson thought he detected a peculiar tinkling sound, somewhat resembling that made by peas dropping into a tin pan.

He got up, and stole quietly downstairs, and out into the yard to investigate.

There was the usual number of cats present.

Every Thomas and Tabby of the lot was shod with a tin arrangement, something like a small-sized oyster-can, which enabled them to run along on the sharp points of the cat-teaser with impunity.

This accounted for the tinkling sounds.

Robinson was astounded.

"Can such things be?" he exclaimed.

Then Robinson felt in the dark, and got hold of an old pail, with the bottom hoop off, and this he hurled across the yard, at the same time missing his footing, and falling down the steps.

The pail struck among the feline congregation with a bang, and they immediately arose as one cat, and scrambled over the fence, cat-teaser and all, into the next yard.

Robinson picked himself up, made a few remarks in the Sclavonic tongue, and limped back to bed again.

Early the next morning, Robinson sent for a workman, and had every trace of the cat-teaser removed from the premises; and a few hours later he was seen at a pawnbroker's negotiating for a second-hand double-barrelled shot gun.

Robinson has lost all faith in the patent cat-teaser.

Forced Sleep.

IT is well known that if we take one of the lower animals, such as an ordinary barn-door cock, and, while holding his head firmly but gently down on a table, draw a line with chalk straight from his beak, the bird will remain in the position in which he was left (without restraint) for a considerable time. Various explanations have been offered of this curious phenomenon, which is analogous to that of the mesmeric state in human beings. Czermak discovered that the chalk line was superfluous, and that it was sufficient to hold the bird for a certain time and prevent any voluntary movement of the head and neck. Preyer ascribed the immobility to fear, a conviction of the futility of struggling having been induced; but Heubel points out that cold-blooded vertebrates, such as the frog, will remain immovable for hours when similarly treated, and he explains the phenomenon as an induced sleep. Others, however, suppose that the action of the brain in these animals is mechanical, and that, to secure a continuance of the wakeful state, it is necessary that the chief nervous centres should be perpetually stimulated by impressions conveyed to the brain. Thus, in forcing an animal to remain motionless, and depriving its brain of the stimuli conveyed by the visual and auditory organs, a state of forced sleep is induced from which the animal awakens only by some impulse from without. The explanation, which appears to be true for most animals, accounts to a certain extent for the phenomena of mesmerism, which at one time, under the name of electro-biology, and under the fostering care of charlatans and quacks, received more attention from the public than it deserved.

The Egotist's Note-book.

TO lie like a pacha! will make a capital simile for future use. Will some one take the trouble to see how many men the Russians have sent to the war, and then count up the list of killed and wounded as per telegram from Turkish sources? This latter will be found to be about twice as many as the total accredited to the Czar as effective troops from the very beginning. Consequently, the Russian army is now about one hundred thousand men less than nothing!

The Yankees are getting very clever in sending their windstorms over here. What with Colorado beetles and tempests, we are having more than our share of the West, and may well cry *Jam satis!*

Here is a hint for the modest of both sexes. A gentleman, wishing not long since to "pop the question," took up the young lady's cat and said—

"Pussy, may I have your mistress?"

It was answered by the lady—

"Say yes, pussy."

Some readers will doubtless remember the ancient joke of the soldier who, to excuse his delay in keeping up with his regiment, cried, on being asked by his captain why he did not come along—

"I have captured a Tartar."

"Bring him along with you."

"He won't come," cried the soldier.

"Then come yourself without him," cried his captain.

"He won't let me," was the soldier's disconsolate reply.

This little passage-at-arms seems as if it were being enacted in Turkey.

So long as policemen travel regular beats at stated times, burglars will find it comparatively easy to evade them. Take any district, and watch the policeman going his round; and, after an evening or two, it is easy to calculate to a nicety for what space of time a particular house will be unwatched. Except in very exceptional circumstances, burglary is made easy by the very regularity of the police rules. But, then, we must have rules, or the invisible blue gentlemen would always be visiting the cooks.

"The objection to Sir John Bennett could not proceed upon the basis of caprice or pleasure, it could not proceed on the footing that Sir John was personally disliked by any one member of the Court. If that were the case the Court might object to a man on the ground of his complexion, on the ground that in his early youth he used to whistle on a Sunday, or on the ground that he was a teetotaler, and therefore could not join in the festivities of the Court." So said Sir John Bennett's advocate the other day, for after the Lord Mayor had for the third time declared him duly elected, Sir John has been rejected. The works of the city want seeing to.

One of the pleasantest things in life is writing with a good pen, and of those I have tried one of the best

is that supplied by John Heath. Of the series sent for trial nothing can be better than the fluent, easy-going, durable gilt pens. They do not corrode, are wiped perfectly clean, and lack only two things to make them perfect, to wit, a good holder and clear flowing ink.

Just in the face of the late colliery explosion those notorious gentlemen, the colliers of Messrs. Newton, Chambers, and Co., near Sheffield, have struck, owing to their being required to use a new kind of benzoline lamp, which they declare to give an insufficient light, and against the use of which most of them are prejudiced. If coal miners would have a little more sense and less prejudice we should have fewer mishaps.

By the way, White, mayor, is announced as being about to seek the grey mare, who is said to be the better horse. This late proceeding is not fair to the lady who might have been lady mayoress, an honour not likely to accrue, unless Sir Thomas White be chosen for the second time.

A bloater merchant at Lowestoft, by name Zaph Naph Pooneer Obadiah Nicodemus Francis Edward Clark, having by mistake swallowed a poisonous lotion instead of medicine, shortly afterwards expired. This is, of course, very terrible; but, in the name of common sense, what do parents mean by insulting their offspring with such a string of absurdities for him to tangle himself with and hop over every time he signs his name?

Has anybody read Mr. Swinburne's article on Charlotte Brontë? If not, let him or her proceed to do so, and admire (?) the manner in which the poet, in a fit of heroine worship, piles up big words till one is mentally deafened, and reminded of a little boy making an unconnected noise on a big bass trombone.

Here is a graceful tribute from America to our riflemen:—"The British have come many thousand miles on purpose to be well beaten by the American riflemen. It is a pity they did not stay at home; but we must admit they took their defeat with great patience. This waste of skill seems appalling when it all ends in defeat. Nevertheless, the discipline is wholesome, and the example leads to practical lessons in life."

So the Penge people have been reprieved, mainly through the exertions of the doctors, who have done so much in the way of taking life that they felt bound to make a move in the other route. The medical fraternity deserve patting on the back. This is a step in the right direction.

Messrs. Sparkes Hall and Co., of 310, Regent-street, have brought out a case that will be welcomed by all sportsmen who love a neat, well-kept hunting or shooting boot. This neat little habit or case contains everything necessary, and the poor appliances of country inns and hotels will not be called upon to dirty boot tops, and smear boots under the pretence

of making them clean. Messrs. Sparkes Hall and Co.'s hunting case finds a place for everything. The boots and trees are at the bottom, and a tray, fitted above, carries blacking, varnish, &c. (in metal bottles, with screw tops), blacking brushes, top brushes, boot-hooks, breeches-hooks, bootjack, and, in fact, everything that can be required by a sportsman who likes to be *bien chaussé*.

A gentleman went into the theatre of a scientific institution, where a lecture was being given on nasal organs. As he entered the lecturer was saying—

"There are three national noses among civilized people, and only three—the Jewish, the Grecian, and the Roman. Each is of a description totally different from the other two, and all three have a distinct character of their own. The Jewish is the only national nose now remaining; the Greek and the Roman are occasionally reproduced among modern nations, but as national characteristics exist no longer.

"The Greek nose has come down to us in the Greek sculptures, and certainly accords better with our northern ideas of personal beauty than any other. Seen in profile, the outline is almost a continuation, without curve or deviation, of the outlines of the forehead, and would seem, phrenologically considered, quite in harmony with the unparalleled progress of the Greeks in art, science, and philosophy. Among the moderns the perfect Greek nose is extremely rare, save on the canvas of our painters.

"The Roman nose is the very incarnation of the idea of combativeness, and suggests the notion that it was borrowed from a bird of prey."

The visitor could hear no more; but, getting up, he walked to the door, where he turned round and exclaimed, pettishly, "Blow your noses!"

The following curious story of luck on a battle-field is, I believe, perfectly authentic. A ball passed straight through a man's body, and the man recovered. Thus much was not unparalleled, but there was something more, highly curious and lucky. The man was consumptive and had formed tubercles. The ball carried away the tubercles, and the man recovered, not only from the wound, but from the consumption.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

"Very like a Whale."



DAY after to-morrow, Mr. Jabez Ryder will exhibit, from one until four o'clock p.m. in Boston Bay, two whales, between fifty and sixty feet in length, which he has reared, tamed, and trained at Nantucket, in his huge cetaceous nursery. These whales will be shown harnessed and bridled, just ahead of the three boats which they will tow about the bay, and by means of two of them Mr.

Ryder and his two sons will turn them to the right and left; start them, stop them, and raise them to the surface, so that all spectators may plainly see them; and he will finish the exhibition by feeding them with his own hands."

By using great diligence I was enabled to discover the secluded quarters of Mr. Jabez Ryder; and then, by expending on him much judicious flattery and something more tangible, I obtained the promise of a place in one of his boats. At ten o'clock on the morning I met him according to appointment, and we proceeded to Granite Wharf, where we entered a boat, in the stern of which I was introduced to Mrs. Ryder and two of her daughters. Miss Ryder presided with much grace at the tiller ropes, while her most practical papa and brother bent the oars, and pulled out into the bay.

In a few minutes we drew up by the side of a large boat that was made fast at the stern to a buoy, and connected, by means of a couple of small, light, but very strong hawsers at the bow, with two other boats, floating thirty feet in advance. Into this boat entered the affable mother and her daughters. With a few strong strokes the oarsmen impelled their boat between the two that were floating ahead. Their bows were toward the east. Into the southern one jumped Mr. Ryder and his youngest son; the northern was already occupied by his two eldest.

I remained in the small boat, which was secured between the two; and Mr. Ryder began at once to indicate the peculiarities that marked the boats on either side of me, and "by means of which" (I use his own words) "I am able to hoist my whales, and also control them. It's queer that I can guide two without any trouble, while I can't do anything whatever with one." So saying, he proceeded to point out that a very carefully-selected strong beam of oak, six inches thick and twelve wide, was made fast to the highest part of each side of the quarter and stern

of each boat, and projected from thence six feet out over the water, and the two (belonging to each boat) were joined together at their extreme ends by a similar beam, four feet four inches in length.

To this cross-beam was joined, by stout, easily-moving hinges, a well-made, door-like frame of deal, two inches thick, five feet long, and four feet wide; one of the four-foot ends was hinged to the cross-beam, and had two inches space on each side between the projecting beams when it was drawn up between them, as it could be, by two ropes that were made fast to the corners opposite to the hinges.

When these ropes were loosened, the end to which they were fastened dropped down into the water, and the frame assumed the appearance of a door hung by its upper portion, having three and a half feet of its lower part submerged. It was retained in a perpendicular position by the ropes attached to its lower corners; these were led through blocks and made fast to the stern, and by using them the frame could be hoisted or lowered at pleasure and at any desired angle, so that it would only come in contact with three and a half feet, three feet, two feet, one foot, or six inches of water, or none at all, when it was drawn up on a level with the beams.

Mr. Ryder having explained the use of these articles to me, concluded by asserting that they served the same purpose to the boats that drags serve to carriages. Then he drew my attention to the centre of each boat, and therein I saw a small powerful windlass. To each was fastened a light strong hawser, that led over the bow into the water; and from the starboard side of the southern boat, and the larboard of the northern, a similar but smaller hawser extended into the water, in the same direction as those leading over the bows.

After pointing out the windlass, the hawsers, and the direction the latter led, he requested me to note the bows and sterns of both boats, and the fact that ten feet in the ends of each were decked over, and everywhere carefully closed in, so as to make these compartments completely air-tight; and they were (so he confidentially assured me) filled to their utmost capacity with the most buoyant gas ever discovered.

The space between these compartments in each boat measured eight feet in length, and served as quarters for the two occupants—"Me and my youngest boy in this, and my two eldest in that."

In the meantime, while he was directing my attention to and explaining the use of the drags, windlasses, hawsers, and compartments, and concluding all with the above words, many steamers and a large number of row-boats crowded with people were drawing near, and beginning to encompass us. Before they had entirely encircled us, Mr. Ryder mounted upon the bows of his boat, and waved his broad-brimmed ribbon-adorned hat until he made himself the most conspicuous figure of the multitude.

Having succeeded in drawing the attention of all eyes, he shouted—

"Leave a clear space, at least six fathoms wide, open before the bows of my boats."

These words being heeded, and all the vessels

compactly ranged on each side of the said open space, he again waved his hat and shouted—

"Watch all, for I shall now raise my team of whales to the surface, so that all persons may see them."

Then leaping down, he and James Ryder began to turn the windlass in his boat, while his other sons did the same in theirs, and thus simultaneously began to wind in the small hawsers that led over the bows. In a little more than three minutes these hawsers were drawn in tight. The turners then turned their windlasses less and less fast.

At intervals, when Mr. Ryder could find breath, he informed me that the gas-filled compartments in the bows and sterns served to prevent the boats from sinking too deep into the water, as the strain on the hawsers became greater and greater while they were "raising the whales more and more out of their native element." Just as he gaspingly concluded this information, I caught a glimpse of dark outlines, and directly after of still darker huge bodies, a short distance from the bows. In another moment the whole of the backs of the two monsters were distinctly visible above the surface.

The ranges of steamers and boats on each side had caused the open space to be transformed from comparatively rough waves to a long and narrow mirror-like expanse that was scarcely more ruffled than a deep, tranquil, flowing river; consequently the water was so smooth that more than half of the bodies of the whales from their heads to their tails might be plainly seen to great advantage. Those spectators who were near could see that two huge collars encircled the necks of the whales about four feet from their heads, and that from these collars a kind of harness extended along their sides and backs, terminating at a broad band which encircled their tails at the smallest part, and just in front of the caudal fins.

To the backs of the collars were made fast the hawsers that led over the bows of the boats, and by means of which the monsters were coaxed from unseen depths, until more than half of their huge bodies met the sight of the surrounding multitude. Then, also, could the crowd observe that the hawsers which led from the sides of the boats were made fast near the extremities of their noses to some ingenious kind of bridles. Having given the spectators ample time to examine as much of his huge team as could be raised above the water, and also their equipments, Mr. Ryder, with the aid of his son, held up a long strip of bunting, on both sides of which, in large letters, were these words—

"Look out! I am about to start my team."

Then he made a motion to his wife and daughters, who at once let slip the rope that held their boat to the buoy. At the same instant the female Ryders cast themselves loose from it, the male members of the family slacked off some fathoms of their bow hawsers; and thereupon, feeling themselves loosened, the whales started off towards the east, towing the boats after them at such great speed that we should soon have been towed clear, and far ahead of all the steamers and small boats, if the Ryders, father and sons, had not brought their drags into immediate use. Rushing to the sterns

of their respective boats, they slacked off the ropes, and lowered the drags into the water, until they hung perpendicular; then making the ropes fast, the drags were brought with their broadest surface in contact with the wakes of the boats.

The instant that the dense masses of brine came rushing against the drags, the whales felt that they were retarded; and they slackened their speed, not finding it easy to draw so large a portion of Boston Bay after them.

By the time the drags were lowered and brought into their upright retarding positions, the whales had towed us more than a mile ahead of all the steamers and small boats.

When the first of these came up with us, Mr. Ryder and his son presented another strip of bunting, adorned with this announcement—

"I will now turn to the northward, and go back to my starting-point."

This being lowered, the drag attached to the southern boat was drawn up out of the water, and the whale harnessed thereto, feeling herself released from all strain, put forth her powers, and swam ahead; while the whale hitched to the northern boat, not feeling herself freed from restraints, remained stationary, and this caused her mate to turn gradually around towards the north, the retarded boat, and the monster joined to it, acting as a stationary pivot, round which she swam, towing her deterred mate with her until their heads faced towards the west.

When this manœuvre was accomplished, and the eyes of both were looking directly toward the buoy from whence they were loosened, then the drag that held back the pivot-boat was drawn up so that it ceased to detain the towing whale, and she immediately, upon feeling the restraint removed, started off at full speed, side by side with the one that had turned her round.

Indeed, with such speed did they swim westward, that our boats would have been brought in contact with several of those containing spectators if they had not made great haste to get out of our way. Just as we were about halfway back to our starting point, the drags were again lowered, and so soon as the whales ceased swimming, the windlasses were put in motion, and the monsters were once more raised until their heads and backs could be seen. Two large bags, well filled with some light and very strong-smelling substance, were lowered into the small boat, and after them descended Mr. Ryder, his son, and myself. The Ryders pulled forward, passing between the monsters until the head of the northern one was reached. Taking hold of the bridle close to her nose, the son held the boat steady, while the father, opening the bag, took out with a large scoop about a gallon of its contents.

As soon as the whale saw or smelled it, she opened her mouth wide enough to swallow not only the bag, but also the boat. Down this yawning cavity her feeder cast the contents of the scoop, which seemed to afford her much gratification. The other whale was then fed in like manner, the spectators shouting with delight at the spectacle. The team having been fed according to the programme, we returned to the boat we had left, and,

without delay, Mr. Ryder, mounting to the highest part of it, shouted to the multitude—

"I have now performed all that the nine superintendents promised, have I not?"

"No, no!" some one bawled, "you have only turned your whales to the left!"

Mr. Ryder answered—

"Oh! ho! that's so! Well, I'll now turn them to the right and left—look out for yourselves one and all!"

Turning to his sons in the other boat, he bade them hoist up their drag as quickly as possible, and a moment after their whale, feeling herself unretarded, dashed ahead, but, being held back on one side by her mate, she swam around northward, and so soon as she had made half a circuit, the drag was put on to her, and ours taken off, whereat our whale performed a similar half circuit, so that by these two evolutions the whales and boats made a course in the bay resembling the shape of the letter S, and came so near running down several boats that the careless, curious, exacting spectators who were in them refrained from requesting a further exhibition of right and left turnings.

Seeing that the crowd appeared to have had enough of the serpentine performance, Mr. Ryder and his sons (by expertly hoisting and lowering the drags alternately, and also by simultaneously drawing in and slacking off the hawsers that were attached to the bridles) guided the whales with the utmost nicety back to and past the buoy, until the boat containing his wife and daughters was brought nearly up to it, and then both drags were dropped so suddenly that one of the Misses Ryder was enabled to catch the buoy-ring with a boat-hook, and hold it while her sister made a small cable fast thereto. This being accomplished, the drags were slowly and gradually hoisted out of the water, until the three boats and the whales were again held in check by the same buoy to which they had been moored at one o'clock.

All the exploits promised on the handbills having been performed to the apparent satisfaction of the crowd, the whole multitude greeted the exhibitors with repeated cheers, and they were soon entirely hemmed in by many boats filled with excited people. Fortunately, the short winter day was nearly ended, and the shades of twilight gathering round caused the vast assemblage to disperse, leaving me to enjoy the conversation of the female Ryders, and the strong-language explanatory monologue of the head of the family. In the course of his lively outpourings, he gave me the whole history of the two whales from infancy to maturity; how he caught, penned, fed, and trained them; how he studied their natures, dispositions, and constitutions; how he obtained daily insights into the first, humoured the second, and doctored the third; and how he christened them Jerusha and Sabina, after his daughters. Then, in an undertone, he informed that he hoped by this means to show all the world that steamships are behind the age, and that steam power will be teetotally eclipsed by whale power.

"Next spring I'll take Sabina and Jerusha, and four other strong propeller-tailed whales, and make up a team of six, and harness this six thousand horse-power team to much larger boats than these,

and take them over to Europe and show the Britishers, Hollanders, Germans, and Russians that whales can do some things besides yield oil, spout, and gobble up prophets. I'll hire the whole North Sea and the Baltic to perform in—I will, by Josh! Then I'll come home and form a General Whale Navigation Company in Nantucket, New Bedford, and New York, and we will take the contracts for carrying with whales all the ocean mails at the rate of sixty miles an hour. More than this, we will tow in and out of every bay and harbour in the world all the ships, barques, brigs, brigantines, schooners, sloops, flotboats, rafts, and catamarans with whales. By the means of young whales we will easily do all this and much more, and by the means of old ones we will give light and heat to all mankind; and thus send all steamship companies that burn coal, all coal companies, and all gas companies to one eternal smash."

Here Mrs. Ryder, perceiving that her spouse, and her sons and daughters that their sire, was becoming excited and betraying his plans, broke in upon him and ended the conversation.

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER XVII.—QUERY, WHICH ROAD?

AFTER parting with Miss Newman, Stephen directed his steps homeward, and walked away something like a rhinoceros with a spear poked through his thick hide, and viciously tickling the tender parts beneath. He ruminated over the adventure, and seemed to think that, although no fealty was owing, yet every thought directed elsewhere was treason to Madeline Glebeley. But then what a face! what hair! what eyes! and what a sigh she gave when she found herself out of danger; and of course, "she" was not Madeline. How sweet to have stayed there for hours, fanning those pale cheeks, and watching the faint flush come back!

"Heigho!" sighed Stephen Vaughan, and then, "What a fool I am!" quoth he.

Directly after he strode along by a copse side, and murdered an unfortunate magpie, by giving it the contents of both barrels of his gun, picked up the poor unfortunate—banned for stealing partridge and pheasant eggs—loaded, and then began thinking again about Madeline Glebeley to such an extent that his face flamed up scarlet as he turned a corner, and ran up against Frank Henderson, who stopped for a few moments talking on indifferent subjects in a very amicable way, considering that the last time we saw the young men together, Frank was dashed bleeding to the ground. But then some time had since passed—time enough for Stephen to apologize for his mad fit, and for Frank, who could afford to be large-hearted, to forgive.

But still there was a sore place in each gentleman, and they did not meet as they had been accustomed some six months before, although they made a studious show of friendliness. So very soon Frank continued his route, and Stephen went on towards the Hall.

"How preciously flushed and agitated he seemed on meeting me," said Frank to himself. "What's

he going to do? I'll walk round the spinney, and see if he goes on home. No, I won't, it looks so mean and spy-like. But I might go round that way though, anyhow."

And the consequence was that Frank Henderson, having weak points in his composition, like other men, walked a little way, and then leaped a gate, and strolled round by the back of a little wood, where he would soon come in sight of the Hall, and the old avenue leading towards it.

"He's going to meet her, curse him!" groaned Stephen Vaughan, forgetting in an instant the whole of his afternoon's adventure. "I wonder which way he'll go. Perhaps across the fields. I'll go round by the back of the spinney. No, I won't; it would be so contemptible to watch him, and he might see me."

Stephen Vaughan walked on for twenty yards, and then muttered again—

"I'd give anything to see her for ten minutes, even at a distance. I don't want to watch him; I don't want to see him again."

So Stephen walked on a little farther to leap a low hedge, go round by the back of the spinney, and singe his wings a little more in the light of Madeline Glebeley's eyes—of course ten times more ardent now that they were fed with a reciprocated love.

There was a sharp corner at the back of the dense wood; and five minutes after, Frank Henderson and Stephen Vaughan ran up against each other again, to their mutual disgust and chagrin.

"Halloa!" said Frank, with a face like a blushing girl.

"Halloa!" said Stephen, grumpily.

"Thought I'd go round home this way," said Frank.

"You didn't pick up a wood-pigeon, did you?" said Stephen—"winged, I think."

"No, I didn't," said Frank, glancing at the capped nipples of Stephen's gun.

Stephen saw the look, and stammered out—

"Hard birds to kill."

"Very, I believe," said Frank, drily. "Didn't hear you fire."

"Didn't you?" said Stephen.

"No," said Frank.

"Afternoon," said Stephen.

"Good afternoon," said Frank.

And after this highly entertaining conversation, the young men parted once more, each gnawing his heart, and calling himself a mean humbug for the bit of deceit he had practised in so bungling a manner.

Ten minutes after, Stephen was at home, where he devoured a huge meat tea, and forgot for the time all about love, and stings, and darts, and the rest of it. And no wonder; for, unknown to him, his heart had met with the first dressing of a natural healing treatment—rather sharp, perhaps, but decidedly salutary. In fact, with all due respect for allopathy, the treatment was decidedly homœopathic—*similia similibus curantur*—a case of like curing like. But so deep a wound could not be cured at once; and Stephen was to have plenty of suffering before it was completely healed. To use another

and very homely simile, Stephen's draughts of love were as though he had tasted the solution formed by a blue paper, appertaining to a seidlitz powder—nauseous and disagreeable; now followed the solution of the white paper—sharp and pungent, causing, too, a violent effervescence, which would eventually form a salutary draught. But Stephen was now about to pass through the ebullition stage—an ebullition so violent that he was tossed, as it were, upon the waves of doubt.

He had a short reprieve after leaving Frank, for the double encounter and his tea had served to direct his thoughts into another channel; but now it was all back again, and he felt terrible. At one time he was determined to hold fast to his faith, and hope to the last that Madeline might relent, prove fickle, or that Frank might tire of his conquest. Then came the recollection of the meadow, with fainting Annie Newman—her pale face, and the fanning process; then burst forth such a sigh—almost a groan—[bubble of carbonic acid gas from the draught]—and Stephen's sighs were upon rather a large scale, and really of a very natural cast; in fact, so natural and unfettered were his fancies, that when his thoughts had full sway he did not take into consideration who might be near him. The consequence was, that when he delivered himself of that tremendous sigh, as he lay smoking upon the sofa, he did not take any notice of Alice, who was busy over her work in the window; nor that, by a singular coincidence, it was over some of that very fancy-work which entailed the use of floss silk; while, what was more singular still, the little sister happened to want another floss silk skein wound; so, coming round to the back of the sofa—

"Hold this skein of silk for me, Stevey," quoth she, as smooth and soft and kittenish in her aspect as was possible.

But Stevey seemed to think that she might quoth as long as she liked, for he did not budge an inch.

"Now, don't be ill-natured, Stevey," said the little thing; "I don't often ask you to help me."

"No," grumbled Steve; "but 'once bit, twice shy,' you know."

"No, I don't," said Alice, pettishly; and then, seeing that the bird had avoided the snare she had prepared, casting off all reserve, and trying to capture him by a *coup de main*—"Now, sir," she continued, in a most peremptory tone, "I want to know what that great stupid sigh was for. You are surely not such an old goose as to be taking on like that about Maddy, are you?"

"Hold your tongue!" cried Stephen.

"No, I shall not hold my tongue, sir, until I know," said Alice, swelling with importance, and looking quite threatening. "But I don't want you to tell me anything, for I can see all about it; you're spooney still, and you ought to know better after all this time."

"Did Tom Phipps teach you that pretty word?" said Stephen, with dignity.

"No, sir, he did not," said Alice; "for I learned it of one Mr. Stephen Vaughan."

"Oh, indeed!" said Stephen, gruffly.

"Now, it's of no use, Steve; I've told you before that you ought to be confidential, and trust your

sister; but you don't a bit. Only to think of it—being so stupid and mooney about Maddy, when there's an ever so much nicer girl come into the place—one whom you might have if you liked, I know."

"No, you don't," said Stephen. "And pray who is your ever so much nicer girl?"

"Ah, I've a good mind not to tell you," said Alice; "for I'm sure you don't deserve it."

"Well, then, don't tell me," said Stephen. "I wish you'd go away, and not bother."

"And I'm not going away, I can tell you, sir. You don't deserve to be noticed by any lady."

"Quite right," said Stephen, calmly.

"Now don't be so provoking and cool," cried Alice, "when I'd been talking to her about you, and Maddy said—"

"Well, what did Miss Glebeley say?" exclaimed Stephen, raising himself upon one arm.

Alice made a pretty little grimace at him by way of reply, and smiled with triumph.

"Now, then, sir," she said, "will you tell me what you were sighing for?"

"No—yes. Well, then, it was because I was bothered and upset. Now, what did she say?"

"And what were you bothered and upset about?" said Alice. "Will you tell me if I tell you what Maddy said?"

"Yes," said Stephen, but very reluctantly.

"Well, then, she said— Now, you really will tell me, Steve?"

"Yes, yes, YES!" shouted Stephen.

"Well, then, she said you were— But I must first tell you it was yesterday evening when we were all at the rectory, and we had been talking about Frank, and Mr. and Mrs. Elton, and papa, and—and Mr. Phipps; and then I was talking about you; and Maddy said you were a fine, noble young fellow, whom she much esteemed."

"Well?" said Stephen.

"Well, sir?" said Alice.

"Well, what else did she say?"

"Why, nothing else. Was not that sufficient? I'm sure it was more than you deserved. Now, tell me what bothered and upset you."

Stephen took several very long draws from his meerschaum, and then sent the smoke eddying in clouds round his sister's little golden head.

"Now, Steve, do answer," said his sister, coaxingly.

"Who was all 'we' up at the rectory?" said Stephen, slowly.

"Oh, you provoking old tease!" cried Alice.

"Why, Annie Newman, and Maddy, and I. We stayed tea after calling to see Maddy. I went with Miss Newman; and I say, Stevey, she is such a darling girl. Heigho, I wish somebody I know wasn't so stupid!"

"Humph!" said Stephen. "I suppose she is her own brother's sister, eh?"

"No, indeed, dear, she isn't; for she's as merry and happy a girl as I ever met. We're quite like sisters already."

"Scratching to-morrow," growled Stephen.

"For shame, Steve, to talk in that way. Now, you promised faithfully to tell me what bothered

and vexed you; and there *is* something, I know, or you would not come and lie here smoking and sighing, as I heard you when you thought you were alone. So come, Stevey, dear, tell me; now do."

"Well," said Stephen, "I have—that is—you know—the young birds have been destroyed a good deal lately, and I went shooting the vermin this morning, and only knocked over a magpie. There, you needn't look like that. It's a fact, 'pon my word."

"Very well, sir; then you won't confide in me, and you break your word. I sha'n't ask you any more; but you don't suppose I'm going to be cheated and put off with such a lame tale as that. But, never mind, I shall find you out. There's been something going on this afternoon; but I shall know."

And then Miss Vaughan, the *petite*, made her skirts rustle as she flounced out of the room.

Alice was right; for she did find her big brother out, and that, too, before many days were passed. Stephen and Frank Henderson had been out for a long ride one morning, when, having entered the drawing-room, they were both somewhat taken aback by seeing Madeline Glebeley and Annie Newman with Alice.

Stephen felt the colour rise to his forehead as he saluted both ladies, for Alice was looking him through and through, and with a smile of triumph upon her countenance which quite aroused all Stephen's endeavours to carry on a quiet, easy conversation.

"Miss Newman has been making me quite proud of your achievement, Steve; I did not know you were such a knight-errant."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said Stephen; "only too glad to have been of any service. Had a capital ride. Like horses, Miss Newman?"

Frank looked up, and smiled at Stephen's confusion, which of course made matters worse.

"May I ask what was the adventure?" he said.

"No, no; nothing at all," said Stephen.

"Indeed," said Miss Newman, quietly, and with plenty of self-possession, "I have cause to be very grateful for Mr. Vaughan's aid; for we poor, weak women are not much accustomed to cope with animals of any kind."

"Oh, nonsense," said Stephen, very red in the face; but more from the malicious smiles of his sister than anything else. "Glad to have been of service to you. Don't mention it. Not worth speaking of. How's your brother, Miss Newman?"

The young lady addressed slightly elevated her eyebrows as she replied that he was quite well; and then the conversation became pretty general, Stephen being somewhat relieved, and whenever he could make pretty sure that Alice's eyes were not upon him, comparing the countenances and remarks of the two visitors. And then, again, the effervescence before alluded to began to make itself felt by the sufferer, who became so irritable that he caused Alice to start, so vicious was the look he bestowed upon her when she tried some little pleasantry at his expense.

However, the visit passed off pretty agreeably, and terminated with the social meal which bears the name of the sedative herb; for Mrs. Vaughan came in from an Edgeton visit, and insisted upon

all staying, the meals at the Hall being rather irregular according to the markets the old squire attended—one day six o'clock would be dinner-time, while the next day it would be devoted to tea; the old gentlemen's rule being old-fashioned early dinners when at home.

CHAPTER XVIII.—FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

ALL quietly settled—all quietly arranged without any romance or excitement—without any of the roughness of life or impediments to the smooth course of their true love—Madeline Glebeley and Frank Henderson were engaged. Frank had spoken to the rector in a quiet, manly way, and the old gentleman had sat with head half averted for a short time, and then turning to his expectant visitor—

"Frank," he said, "I have one principal aim in life—the happiness of my child. The thought of parting with her, though, seems unbearable. Leave me now, and rest content with the recollection that the happy future of Madeline takes up a large part of my daily thought."

So Frank left him, perfectly content with the success of the interview; and it seemed strange, but Madeline was sitting looking extremely conscious in the drawing-room when Frank joined her, and to a looker-on there did not seem to be much doubt as to what would tend to the fair girl's happiness. So intent, too, were they, that they did not see the Rector come to the door, and stand looking a minute, sigh, and then pass on; but, though looking serious, decidedly not unhappy. And so it seemed to be all quietly settled, and Frank and Madeline were looked upon as in that state of probation—the engaged.

Now, no doubt the Rector was to blame, and might have looked higher for his child; but then he was a quiet, simple man, and could not see that money and position were the sole necessities for happiness. He occupied no high position himself, scholarly and clever though he was, and for long years now he had contented himself with his lot, and settled more and more to his little country rectory.

The fact was, the Rector had a fault—a grand fault—a regular flaw in his composition, which prevented his being ranged upon the shelf with the aristocratic china of the district. It was allowed that he was of the right material, but the crack in his composition marred all; and, consequently, he was looked down upon. The fact of it was, he was poor—very poor for a gentleman. The living did not produce two hundred pounds per annum; and when his daughter's education, domestic expenditure, an occasional new garment, and last, but not least, his poor, had been remembered, the Reverend Charles Glebeley had not much surplus with which to give dinner parties; and therefore he contented himself with the friendship of the lawyer, the doctor, and Squire Vaughan, falling back upon the society of his daughter and his garden.

And perhaps, after all, Mr. Glebeley's was not an unhappy life; he had his parishioners to attend to—people who could not see the crack in the china, but esteemed him as he deserved, for his was

a most lovable disposition; then, too, he had his library—one of no mean value, and full of old friends, the result of much economy, and many years' patient collecting; while above all he had the peace of mind falling to the share of a man who possesses the consciousness of having done his duty. Ill-natured people, in allusion to his hobby, had once spoken of him as "the rectory gardener;" and in a place like Waveley, any scrap of scandal was like leaven, spreading through and through in a very short time; but when it reached the Rector's ears, he only smiled and said—

"Yes, I'm the rectory gardener and the village shepherd."

The Reverend Charles Glebeley had possessed but little patronage in his early life, and he had lived for long long years the life of a poor curate, waiting, hoping, and trusting, and sharing these longings with one whom he had loved since his college days, but whom prudence forbade that he should marry. Grace Aylmore loved the poor curate well in return, and patiently she waited with him—waited until her maiden charms ripened into womanhood—waited, too, till time passed, and her beauty fled to return no more.

But preferment came at last, and the long-awaited-for ceremony was performed. Two years of true happiness passed swiftly away in their peaceful home, and then Grace breathed a last farewell to her husband as she set off on her journey to the unknown land, leaving a tiny daughter to the care of her widowed husband.

A Shark Story.

IN February, 1823, I was on board of a vessel owned by members of my mother's family, which sailed from Messina, in Sicily, bound for St. Petersburg.

The captain was far gone in consumption. The doctor who attended him—and had kindly taken him to his house during our stay in port—strongly urged his remaining on shore, but to no purpose. He hoped he might live to be landed in the island of Jersey, his native place, on our way up Channel. But he died a fortnight after leaving Messina, and we consigned his body to the deep between Cape de Gatta and Cape Palos, on the coast of Spain.

For some days previous to the captain's death, a large shark followed the vessel, and was daily seen by all hands; but, strange to say, he did not put in an appearance on the day of the burial, though we were becalmed all the morning.

Two days later, as we were nearing Gibraltar, with a light air from the eastward, I proposed to the new captain to give the white streak a touch of paint, to make the old craft look ship-shape. No sooner said than done. A ladder was slung over the side with a board on the rungs, forming a safe scaffold; and another young man and myself went to work. One side was finished, and we had only the port quarter to paint, when a man in the main-top shouted, in an excited tone—

"Alongside there! Halloo! Look out, the shark is close to you!"

I turned round quick as thought, and, to my in-

expressible horror, I beheld the huge monster—for he was 12ft. to 15ft. in length—within six feet of us, evidently about to make his deadly spring.

Shouting to my companion, I dropped a large paint brush overboard, and sprang up the rope which held the ladder, and gained the deck.

As I write, I fancy I see the leering eyes of the monster in anticipation of a glorious feed. The stage was about two feet from the water. The man in the top said that the moment I dropped the brush the shark followed it. I was sorry it did not hold a few ounces of arsenic or other deadly poison. We finished our job, nevertheless, the man in the top keeping watch, and the captain on the quarter with a loaded gun.

Under the Yellow Flag.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XV.

IT was too dark to make out who they were for certain; but it struck me that one was Graham, and that the other—I don't know why, save for their friendly manner—was Captain Black.

A feeling of curiosity prompted me to follow them, which I did cautiously, for I did not wish to wear the appearance of an eavesdropper; but it seemed strange that at so late an hour any one should be prowling about, and it almost looked as though, in doubt as to my attention to the duty that had devolved upon me, the watch was being watched, or led into some trap.

I marked as well as I could the spot where they had entered, and crept on till I could hear the under-wood rustle as they passed on, till I had followed them for about a quarter of an hour; when the murmur of voices fell upon my ear, and, proceeding still more carefully, I slowly approached.

But what could it mean, I asked myself—a meeting held privately, unknown to me? Or was it rescue for us at last—a searching party landed from some vessel on the other side of the island? My heart beat tumultuously as this thought struck me, and, exercising less caution, I hurried on, till in an open space, just in front of me, I could dimly make out a score or so of figures talking hurriedly in a low murmur; but in a tongue I could not comprehend.

I had seen enough, though, to know that there was danger, and I turned to go; when, in the dark alley I had come down, I confronted a figure dimly shadowed forth against the foliage.

He uttered some guttural word, and I knew that it was an enemy, when, dashing him back, I leaped over his body and made for the huts to give the alarm. Before I had gone fifty yards, I became aware of another enemy in my front; and, half mad with dread and anxiety, I charged down upon him, but he gave way, striking at me as I passed, as did another and another, the wood seeming to be full of foes. Twice I tripped in the darkness, and fell, feeling that I should rise no more, for I could hear several enemies in full pursuit; but leaping to my feet, I dashed on, to reach the open at last, panting and breathless, just as the moon began to peep over the dark sea, sending a long path of light across the

boundless space, and lighting up the dark sails of a small prahu standing just in the mouth of the bay.

In the same moment of time, too, I could see her boat lying upon the sands, at a point where a few trees would have concealed her from my view, even had it not been dark.

I could see it all now. The prahu's men had come ashore on the other side of the island, and were working their way across, while the vessel had coasted round. But what was their object? I shuddered as I thought of our defenceless condition, and the atrocities I had heard attributed to the ferocious crews of the piratical prahus, of which I could not entertain a doubt but that this was one.

"Here, wake up—danger!" I shouted, as I dashed into the hut and shook the first man, who proved to be Graham, whose duty it would have been to relieve me a couple of hours later.

In an instant the whole hut was in confusion, men stumbling together in the dark to get at such weapons as we had, as I explained to first one and then another the cause of the alarm.

"Mr. Leslie," exclaimed a voice then that I well knew, though the speaker was invisible, "Captain Black—Timkin—all those who are ready. Now for it; make a rush to the other hut, for there are those there it is our duty to protect."

"His first thought," I muttered to myself.

But there was no time for thought but action; and, following the self-constituted leader, we who had been named, and half a dozen more, made a dash for the other hut, to be met halfway by a yelling, howling crew of fiends, who fought fiercely as we rushed into their midst, giving way a little before us, but only to close in again; and for five minutes there was a desperate struggle.

Captain Black was the first to go down, and then two stalwart fellows dashed at me, the first receiving the pistol-shot I aimed at him and falling; but the second had me by the throat, forced me back, and in the slanting moonbeams I saw a waved kris raised to strike me, when a white face seemed to dart forward out of the crowd, there was the heavy impact as of a fierce blow, and the Malay fell from me as if stricken dead by Graham's blow, for he it was who had preserved me.

Then the struggle went on again; men swaying to and fro in a fierce grip, now separating, now closing again, tripping over the bodies who had fallen—this being my own fate; for once more, with a savage foe striking at me, I fell, and again I was preserved from instant death by some unknown hand. Then came a time of unconsciousness, from which I awoke to find myself bound hand and foot, and lying against some one who was muttering and growling in a low, fierce voice.

Raising my head, I could make out that on the other side lay the captain, three sailors, Graham, and another passenger, all tied hand and foot, and Graham bleeding from a wound in the forehead; while, a few paces off, lay several bodies, for the most part of wounded men, but who were in the last hours of their existence.

"Much hurt, sir?" whispered a voice in my ear.

"Not a great deal," I answered. "But the ladies, Timkin, what of them?"

"All safe yet, sir; and they're a keeping guard over them in the hut. Only wish I had hold of the chap as tied me," he groaned.

And giving his hands a wrench, they seemed to be easier, for he lay quite still for a time.

I should have tried to communicate with Captain Black then, had not a fierce-looking Malay, with a naked kris, stepped up as if to keep guard over us, staying, watching our every movement hour after hour, till the welcome light of morning came to display the full extent of our sufferings.

I could not tell what had passed where the wounded men had lain; but as I lay, partly on one side, I could now see Captain Black's pale—deathly pale—countenance; and we tried to converse by looks, one reading from the other's eyes the meaning of a heartrending shriek for mercy, and two or three dull, heavy groans. It was plain enough, though we could not see it—the seriously wounded had been killed; and in imagination I had seen the keen, finely pointed, poisoned kris plunged into body after body; and then I lay waiting for my own turn to come.

After a while, the party—about thirty strong they seemed to be—approached the hut, and dragged down the canvas hanging and the hurdle that closed it of a night; and then, obeying the fierce signs of their captors, the trembling women came slowly out one by one, and sat down upon the sands in a spot pointed out by a fierce-looking warrior, who seemed to be the leader.

Biscuit and water were given them from our stores, and then the day was passed in what appeared to us to be a chaffering as to the division of the spoil.

Towards evening, after suffering fearful torture from the heat of the sun, our wounds and bruises, and the horrible thirst which afflicted us, a fresh Malay came up and gave us water and biscuit, when, obtaining permission to sit up, we could see another group of men by the farther hut, and with them about half the women, while close to us were Mrs. Black, Eve, and four more. There was another prahu, too, now in the bay, with what seemed to be a fac-simile of one of the Indiaman's boats lying by the sands.

"Picked up at sea," growled Timkin, with his mouth full of biscuit, of which he seemed to eat heartily, though every morsel I took seemed to choke me, as with great difficulty I raised it to my mouth.

It was plain enough to see now that a division of the plunder had been made; and as we sat there in the pleasant cool of that evening, the men belonging to the first prahu reached her, put on board the provisions and arms that fell to their share, then marched down the passengers and sailors who had survived the struggle at the hut, and lastly the women. Then, waiting a while till the tide rose sufficiently to float her off, they hoisted their matting sails and slowly put off to sea.

The party whose prisoners we were seemed, however, to be in no hurry to depart, but lay carelessly about for another hour, till one sprang up and said something to the others, when half a dozen of them came up to where the ladies sat, signed to them to

rise, and then led them, stony of face, and looking to us for the help we could not give, to the boat, in which they were placed; and soon after we could see their light dresses on board the prahu, as she lay about a couple of hundred yards from the shore.

Then returning, they began leisurely to place the remainder of the provisions and their share of the plunder in the boat, loading it with everything that took their fancy; so that, from the evening shadows drawing on fast, it seemed to grow quite dark before they had done, when, probably for greater security, the man who was guarding us gave each in turn an unceremonious push, so that we lay once more helpless upon the sand.

I should think we had lain there for half an hour, during which I had been straining my eyes to make out what our captors were doing, when suddenly there was a flash a little off to the right, then a ruddy flame, which showed faintly the hull of the prahu on the smooth waters of the bay, the dark, waving, feathery trees, and the swarthy faces of the rough Malayan crew, who seemed now to be squatting round the fire, and, as far as I could make out after awhile, feasting previous to setting forth when the moon rose.

But that would be some hours yet, as I knew; and lying there in pain and misery, I almost envied the poor creatures whose sufferings were over, and who lay only some thirty yards from us, and nearer to the shore.

My musings were interrupted by a stealthy step, and then I saw in a few moments, standing out dark between us and the fire, the figure of one of the Malays, who came lightly up, muttered a few words to our guard, and then went back.

In about another quarter of an hour a change took place. Our guard was relieved, and went down to the fire; while the man who took his place looked at us for a few minutes, and then sat down at a little distance with his back to us, so that I could see he was a huge, stalwart fellow, as he completely hid the fire from my sight.

Then another interval occurred, broken only by a Malay coming up to the guard, speaking, and receiving only a guttural "Humph!" in reply, and then returning to his companions.

I began to calculate that a couple more hours must elapse before they would set sail, if they were waiting for the moon; and wondered how long they would be before taking us on board, thinking, too, with a shudder, that it was possible they might not follow the example of their companions, but butcher us where we lay, when the man on guard rose, came and carefully looked us over in turn, walked round, and then, with his cat-like step, went back to his place, so that once more I could faintly see his broad shoulders marked out against the light.

It was hard work to keep from uttering a groan now and then, for my bonds were cutting into my wrists and ankles, and my legs felt swelled, while the blood seemed ready to burst through the throbbing veins.

I had heard a faint rustling noise near me, repeated at intervals, accompanied by hard breathing, and once I noticed that it attracted our guard's attention, for he turned his head so that I could

faintly trace his profile for a few moments; then he rose and came to us, but only to return apparently satisfied to his seat.

Then there was another interval of silence, when it seemed that an electric shock ran through me; for, following upon a soft, gliding noise, a hand seemed to come out of the darkness and rest upon my mouth, while a warm pair of lips touched my ears as they whispered—

"Not a word!"

CHAPTER XVI.

I CHECKED the cry of astonishment that nearly escaped me; and then, in obedience to another whisper, though I seemed to grudge the act, I softly raised my wrists, when there was the sharp, keen working of a knife, and they were free. Then it seemed that the same act was performed for the huge sailor behind me, before I felt Graham—for it was he—glide down between us, and set free our ankles.

What was to follow next? I could not tell, though my reason told me that we must make for the boat. But there was our guard.

Just at this moment a loud burst of merriment came up from the fire, and our guard shifted uneasily, a fresh burst of flame springing up just then, as if fresh fuel had been added, and throwing up his form quite plainly.

The next minute I stretched out my numbed arm to touch Graham, but he was not there; Timkin, but he was gone too; and I had hardly turned back as silently as possible, when I saw a huge form seem to rise out of the earth behind the Malay; then there was a slight struggle, the gurgling noise of one trying to speak, again a faint struggle, the beating as of hand or foot upon the sand, a soft tearing noise, and then silence, and I saw the figure of Timkin slowly rise up, and creep to one side.

"Quick! rub your numbed legs for a minute," whispered Graham at my ear. "Captain Black, can you get down to the boat, think you? and you?" was whispered, now to one and then to another out of the darkness, affirmatives being given in reply. "Then we may perhaps yet escape, if we can reach the boat, and get off the women before they take the alarm."

"Here, down for your lives!" I whispered, as the hope within me seemed crushed out; for from the direction of the fire I could see one of the Malays once more coming up.

But almost at the same moment I saw Graham glide forward with Timkin, press him down into the guard's place, and then pass out of my sight, as he crouched behind him.

As the Malay came hastily forward over the sand, he called out to the guard as before, when, it seemed to me, the same guttural response was given; but apparently it did not satisfy the new-comer, who came cautiously forward, kris in hand, to where the sailor sat in the darkness, spoke again, touched him, and then uttered a stifled cry, as he was clasped—crushed almost—in those mighty arms, while Graham prevented his further crying out by thrusting something into his mouth. Then the poor wretch was dashed heavily to the ground, and lay

motionless; and all this played out against the bright glow and seen dimly from where I lay, while a deep silence ensued, as we listened to make out whether the alarm had spread to the main body by the fire.

"Quick, here!—handkerchiefs, neckties!" whispered Graham; and the Malay's arms and legs were bound in a few moments. "Now then for the boat. Move like ghosts," he whispered. "Captain Black, lean on me!"

"You must leave me," gasped the poor captain. "I'm about spent." And his words there, in that darkness, seemed to have a strange and solemn effect. "Don't wait for me, but save yourself. But a moment, Mr. Graham, Mr. Leslie, Timkin, my poor wife!—as you are men, and Christians, swear to protect and try and save her!"

"I swear, Captain Black!" said a deep voice at my side; "and you too. Try and rise; we will help you."

"No, no; make for the boat, get to the prahu, and cut her cable; the tide is beginning to ebb by now; and though they swim like ducks, they will not catch you. God bless you all! And now, for the women's sake, pray go!"

"If I do, may I be somethinged!" growled Timkin. "Look alive, gentlemen, they'll be up here directly to see why that black devil don't come back. Don't groan, sir. Here, gents, help—heave him up, and I'll carry him pig-a-back like a shot."

"Quick, then," whispered Graham, "for here they come."

And in effect a stir could be seen by the side of the fire, as we began to make our way towards the boat.

Fortunately for us, the flame was decreasing, or we must have been seen; but I trembled as I caught sight of a faint light in the east, and knew that the moon would soon rise. While gazing earnestly in that direction, I stumbled and fell heavily over one of the bodies that lay in the path; but forgetting my stiffness and wounds in the excitement, I leaped up again directly, and closely following the dark gliding shadows in front, found that Graham had heard me slip, and turned back to my help.

"I can get on," I said, sternly, as we hurried after Timkin.

"For God's sake, haste then," he replied. "But where are the sailors, Ellis and Marks?"

"Impossible to say," I answered. "Perhaps in front."

As we reached the spot where we fancied the boat to be, we could hear a loud shouting behind us, just in the place we had so lately left; but no boat was to be seen, and it was evident that we had missed her in the dark.

"Look out, gentlemen, for I'm loaded," whispered Timkin; "here's danger coming. No mercy now."

"No, no!—friends, friends!" exclaimed voices, one of which I knew to be Mr. Stayman's. "But in God's name where's the boat?"

"Wasn't it your way?" panted Timkin.

"No, no," groaned the first speaker. "Haven't you seen it? Heaven save us, or we shall be butchered after all."

"Better have died quietly, without this bit of humbugging hope," groaned one of the sailors.

"Wade into the water all together, and softly, to the west'ard," whispered Timkin.

And, as the shouting and sounds of running came nearer, we waded on for a few yards, when a joyous cry escaped me—I had touched the rope which moored the cutter to the shore.

"In with you on both sides, gentlemen," whispered Timkin.

And I heard a rush through the water as he hastened to place the captain on board. But determined now, in this excitement and dread peril, to try and be of some service, I seized the rope, and, turning landward, followed it along to the little kedge, dragging it from the sand—as I was down on my hands and knees—just as a figure rushed out of the darkness, fell over me with a savage cry, and went down sprawling upon the beach. The next instant I had dashed into the water, holding fast by the kedge, which fortunately was only a few pounds in weight.

I tried hard to keep my feet, but the rope tightened, and I was dragged off them, and, partly swimming, partly struggling to keep afloat, I was towed in the wake of the boat for some distance before I dared to utter a cry for help.

"Who's that?" whispered a voice.

"Haul in the rope," I gasped, half choked, which was immediately done, and I was eagerly helped on board.

"I thought you were with us, Leslie?" said Graham.

"I went back to get up the little grapnel," I panted.

"And I've been five-and-twenty year at sea, and never thought of that," growled Timkin, "only that she ran off very easy."

"Silence!" whispered Graham, "and pull gently, or we shall miss the prahu."

Gently dipping their oars, the men rowed on; but from the splashing noise we could make out that there were some of the enemy still swimming after us.

Shooting the Rapids.

WE were sitting round the fire one winter's evening, when the snow was thick on the ground outside, and gusts of bitter north wind shook the casements at intervals, our pipes filled, and glasses of grog on the table. Phil Kearney and I were paying a visit to our old friend Wilson, neither of us having seen him since we were at college together. We had been talking over our reminiscences of those days, and had relapsed into silence, each of us occupied with his own thoughts, when Wilson broke the stillness with a sigh.

"Heigho! what a little while ago it all seems! And yet here we are—one of us with grown-up sons and daughters, and the other two confirmed old bachelors!"

"And what a little one seems to have done in all those years," I said, thoughtfully.

"H'm, I don't know," said Kearney. "I suppose time does go faster with you hardworking literary

people than with those who, like me, travel much and think little."

There was another pause, during which a stronger gust moaned round the house.

"Well, this won't do," said our host—"the conversation has taken quite a melancholy turn. What do you say to telling us some of your adventures, Phil?"

"Hear, hear!" said I—"only you mustn't object if I make use of them. I'm awfully hard up for ideas."

Kearney looked meditatively at the fire, while Wilson replenished our glasses, poked the fire, and threw on another log.

"We're ready, my boy. Fire away."

"Very well," said Phil. "Here goes for a beginning; but I must fill my pipe first."

Having done so, he began:—

"About ten years ago—no, I think it must be nearer fifteen—I was with a party of friends hunting on the Rocky Mountains. There were eight of us in all; but I needn't tell you all their names. One of them, however, I may mention particularly; he was a tall, good-looking young Englishman, as frank and generous a fellow as I have ever met. He must have been about twenty-four, I should say. Well, we were very good friends in no time, and became quite confidential as we sat over the camp fire of an evening. We shared the same tent, so, not unnaturally in the six weeks that we camped out in those wild regions, I heard all about his relations and friends in England. He was to be married to a certain young lady, who possessed, according to him, all the cardinal virtues, and beauty as well; but whose father, considering Charley (did I say his name—Charley Ebsworth) a rather changeable young man—which he really was in some respects—and the girl too young, had decreed that he should not see her for a year. If, at the end of that time, they had neither of them altered their minds, he wouldn't stand in the way."

"I've heard something very much like that before somewhere," said Wilson.

"Ditto," said I.

"Do you want me to invent a story, or to tell you my own experience?"

"Don't believe you could invent a story to save your life," muttered our host.

"You're right; I don't suppose I could. Then be content with facts. Where did I get to?"

"Father wouldn't stop them."

"Oh, I remember. Well, we had very bad sport; and for ever so long never had a glimpse of a bear, which was what we most wanted, until one day Ebsworth and I determined to go out alone and try our luck, which promised more fun if we did succeed in stalking one, as there was a spice of danger about it. We provided ourselves with some dry biscuits, and each put a whisky-flask in his pocket, loaded our guns, and examined our knives to see that they were in trim, and to be depended on. Thus prepared for an encounter with a grizzly, we set off early one fine, cold, brisk morning, determined not to return without something to show, if we could help it.

"Our camp was fixed on the side of a mountain;

at the bottom of the valley ran a river, smooth and untroubled, while above were the steep, rocky sides, covered with pine trees in places, though here and there showing rugged and barren of verdure. The dark tops of the pine trees stood out in strong relief against the sky, while on the other side of us peak after peak raised itself to touch the clouds. We climbed upwards, and were soon threading our way amongst the trees. We walked for a long way, sometimes climbing up, sometimes descending, without seeing a sign of game. After a time we came to where the river had hewn itself a path out of the rock, and rushed turbulently between steep, smooth walls, surmounted by trees whose roots were often exposed to view where the water had washed the soil away when swollen during the rainy season. Several times we came upon Indians, in their birch canoes, shooting the rapids, with feather head-dresses and bright-coloured garments, their dark faces animated with the excitement as they steered their way among the black rocks that showed in places surrounded by white foam. I suppose there isn't much danger really to them, as they are so used to it; but an inexperienced man would certainly be dashed to pieces in less than a minute if he were to venture down those boiling curves.

"At last we came upon sheep tracks, and following them for a little distance we were soon rejoiced with the sight of four mountain sheep feeding, some six hundred yards off. We crept up very cautiously, till near enough to get a good shot, and fired simultaneously. One fell. The other three galloped off, apparently unhurt. I fired my other barrel after them, but without effect.

"The sheep we found quite dead. Charley had a great objection to skinning and cutting it up, so I performed that operation, and hung the quarters on the branch of a tree, out of the reach of bears should any come that way. Then we went on some miles farther, without seeing a sign of a bear, or of game of any kind; and at last we thought it best to turn back, or we might not be able to reach the camp before nightfall. When we had nearly arrived at the place where we had shot the sheep, Ebsworth seized me by the arm.

"Look there!" he whispered, excitedly—"straight before you. Do you see?"

"And there, sure enough, under a tree, some distance ahead, was a huge bear, patting something on the ground—what, we could not see.

"We had better get up trees," I began.

"But before the words were well out of my mouth, he fired, and his shot was followed by a yell of rage from the great brute, which raised itself on its hind legs, and looked round to see who were its assailants. Then, apparently catching sight of us, it came towards us, full pelt.

"Up a tree, Charley, quick!" I shouted; and we darted off in different directions.

"But in a minute I became aware that the nearest tree was a hundred yards off, and that the beast would be on me before I could get to it. I turned round, took a hasty aim, and fired; but with no other effect than that of lessening the distance between us by stopping. I saw then that my only chance

lay in the hope of checking his advance with the other barrel, and fired again. But this second shot took no effect, and I had but just time to pull out my knife, when he was upon me. I can recall the sensation now exactly—the horrid feeling of being clasped in his embrace, of his hot breath upon me, and his fur stifling me. I struck at him with my knife, and, finally, buried it in his side before I lost consciousness.

"When I opened my eyes, it was to find Charley Ebsworth supporting me, pale as death, and administering whisky neat, with a very anxious expression of countenance.

"Are you better?" he asked. "I really thought the beast had done for you."

"So did I."

"And I sat up, and felt myself, to see if any bones were broken. I felt rather faint, and was considerably bruised, but that was all the harm done.

"What a narrow escape!" I exclaimed. "By Jove, Charley, that was near. Where is it?"

"Behind you," was the answer.

"And, sure enough, there it lay, quite dead.

"How did you manage it?" was naturally my next question.

"Why, I came up behind and struck at him, when he dropped you and turned on me. And then we had a bit of a tussle; but you had wounded him considerably already, so I disposed of him without much difficulty."

"And are you not hurt at all?" I asked.

"He held out his arm, which he had bound up with his handkerchief.

"I did get clawed slightly there, that's all. Now you stop here, while I fetch some water for you, and wash my arm. I sha'n't be many minutes, for I can hear the river now, so it can't be far off."

"I got on to my feet, meaning to go with him, but felt too sick and giddy, so had to sit down again, and watch him disappear amongst the trees.

"I shall have to walk fast, if we mean to get back to camp to-night," I thought, as I sat waiting.

"The minutes slipped by, and at last I grew tired of sitting still, and, rising to my feet again, staggered about a bit, to get rid of the giddiness; and after a little of the whisky, which I had in my pocket, felt ever so much better. Charley's flask lay on the ground, where he had lain it when giving me some out of the little metal cup that fitted on to the bottom, and I picked it up to put in my pocket, for fear it might be forgotten.

"What a long time he is!" I thought, after a while, "I had better go and look after him."

"So I set off in the direction I had seen him take, and halloa'd to him, but received no response. Certainly, it was the way he had gone, because I had noticed him pass that fallen tree, and sure enough the sound of water was nearer already. It could not be far off, and I walked on, and was soon greeted with a sight of the river, rushing along a gorge, fifty feet below me. It was a perfectly perpendicular wall of rock on the top of which I stood. I saw at once that, as he could not get down there, he must have turned either to the left or the right, to find some means of descending to the water. To the left, evidently, it would be no use to go, as the cliff

became every moment more steep; but to the right it descended, and so that way I turned. I shouted again, and called 'Charley' at the top of my voice; but there was no answer. After walking some little distance, I came to a place where it was possible to climb down, and was soon having a deep refreshing draught; but though I looked up and down the stream there was not a sign of him I sought. Receiving no reply to my repeated shouting, cooeing, and whistling, I decided that I must have missed him, and that he had returned to the place where he had left me. So, painfully and slowly, I clambered up where I had descended, and set off to find my way back again.

"I walked along the edge of the cliff again, till I came to where I had first looked over, and, lying down on my face, for I was still giddy, I looked over the side again, down at the rushing water. Could he have fallen over the edge? The horrible thought would present itself to me; and if he had, he must certainly have been dashed to pieces on the rocks below. Turning sick at the mere idea of such a thing, I went back to the place where the bear was lying, hoping to find him there waiting for me; but no—he was not there, nor was there anything to show that he had been and gone again. I wandered about, and whistled, and halloa'd again, till I was hoarse; when I came to the conclusion that he must have lost himself, and would most probably endeavour to find his way back to the camp, which I had better do as well. The worst of it was, that he had with him neither gun, knife, nor whisky-flask, having left all these lying on the ground by me.

"I went back, picked up my gun and his too, stuck both knives into my belt, and set off. The sun was now on the point of setting, so long a time had been spent in the fight with the bear, and in Ebsworth's disappearance and my search for him. I soon became aware that it would be dark before I could be a quarter of the way back.

"Now I'll have a little more grog, and fill up my pipe, if you please."

"Let me fill up your glass," said Wilson. "Not so much whisky! Pooh, nonsense, man, you'll be able to go on all the better. I say, Phil, it is true, isn't it?"

"Perfectly, every word of it. Hark! What a night it is!"

"Well, go on."

"I walked for some distance, and then stopped, and hesitated. I could not feel sure that I was going the right way. It was getting dusk, too; so there was nothing for it but to get up the most suitable tree I could find, and wait for the morning. I was so tired that I managed to sleep in spite of the discomforts of my position. For a tree is not a convenient place to sleep in, especially if you haven't a blanket or anything to roll yourself up in. It was extremely cold too, but a little pull from my flask kept me from feeling that so much.

"In the morning I descended, and looked about me. I had not the least idea where I was; but a little reflection told me that if I looked towards the north the river must be to my right hand, and by following the river I must reach the camp in

time. I had wandered away from the water the evening before, and it was, in consequence, some time before I reached it again. However, before the sun set again the welcome sight of the camp greeted me; and hungry, faint, and thoroughly worn out, I presented myself among the party. They had sent out in search of us—two in one direction, two in another; and were as much horrified to see me return without Charley Ebsworth as I was to find he was not in camp.

"The next day we left one man in charge of the camp, and the rest of us rode off together to look for him. When we came to the tree on which we had hung the mutton, I was surprised to find it was not there, a fact which I had not noticed on the previous evening, never having thought about it then. However, a little farther on we came to the skin, carefully patted into the ground, when I remembered that, when we first caught sight of the bear, it was patting something into the earth; and one of the party, who understood the habits of the grizzly, set to work to dig up the earth, and there, a little way down, were the four quarters of my sheep. Not far from this lay the carcase of the bear; but we were too anxious about Charley to stop for the skin, and continued our search.

"At night we all met together in camp again, weary and dispirited after our fruitless quest. For the two or three succeeding days we scoured the country again, each time taking a wider range; but it was all in vain. We assembled in camp each night, feeling the case more hopeless, but dreading to say that it must be given up. There seemed to be no way but one of accounting for his extraordinary disappearance, and that was that he had fallen over the cliff, and been dashed on the rocks, when his body would be washed away by the current.

"At last we had to confess that further search was useless, and that we must give up, and turn southward, all the pleasure of our excursion being spoiled by this melancholy ending. We were soon in civilized regions again, and separated to go our different ways. I felt that I ought to write to Charley's friends; but, as I had never heard the names or address of any of them, it was impossible to do so.

"After that, you know, I spent a year in South America, before I returned to England, and it was here that, by a most extraordinary coincidence—well, that is putting the end first. Let me see—it was five years after the adventure in the Rocky Mountains, that I was going on a long railway journey, two or three days before Christmas, by night.

My fellow-passengers were a little short, stout, jolly man, very talkative and good-tempered; a rather grave, quiet individual, who was a doctor, I think he told us; and a man so much wrapped up, and with his hat so down over his eyes, that we could not see what he was like.

"It was just such a night as this; but we made ourselves very comfortable, and got talking about many things very pleasantly, except the muffled-up man in the corner, who did not speak a word. We were all going a long distance, which made us the

more chatty, as we should have to pass some time together.

"The doctor informed us that he was going to fetch his sister from the north of England, to spend Christmas with him in London. The little fat man and I were both going to spend the next week with relatives in Scotland.

"And are you, sir, on your way to pass Christmas with your friends?" asked the doctor, making an endeavour to draw the gentleman in the corner into the conversation.

"No," he answered, abruptly and sharply; "I have no friends to pass it with."

His voice made me start violently.

"Charley!" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

"He looked up then for the first time, and his eyes met mine—the same clear, dark grey eyes; there was no doubt about it: it was Charley Ebsworth.

"I started up, and going to that end of the carriage, sat down opposite to him.

"Charley, is it really you? Alive and well? Thank Heaven! But why did you not speak to me before?" I asked, as we exchanged a warm clasp of the hand. "Did you not know me?"

"I knew you directly you entered the carriage," he answered.

"Then why did you not speak?"

"He did not answer. The doctor and the little stout man, after looking at us for a minute in mute astonishment, had, with true gentlemanly instinct, moved close up to the other window, and entered into conversation.

"What became of you when you left me on the mountain?" I asked.

"I fell over the cliff," he answered. "My arm, you know, was torn open, and I turned giddy, and lost my balance. The water was deep where I fell, and I came to the top, and was carried along a little way, till I managed to cling to a rock, and climb on to it. Then I was picked off by an Indian in a canoe."

"And then, why did you not come back to the camp?" I asked.

"The Indian kept me prisoner for six long months before I managed to get away, when I returned home as quickly as I could."

"His tone was so melancholy, that I did not like to question him further, but merely pressed his hand, and looked at him inquiringly.

"She was married," he said, in a low tone, and averted his face.

"Well, that is all. I have only seen him three times since. He is not at all the same fellow that I knew in North America—he is cynical and reserved, and is married now to a woman older than himself, with a lot of money—

"Upon my word, if Wilson isn't fast asleep!"

A CLERGYMAN and one of his elderly parishioners were walking home from church one frosty day lately, when the old gentleman slipped and fell flat on his back. The minister, looking at him a moment, and being assured that he was not much hurt, said to him, "Friend, sinners stand on slippery places." The old gentleman looked up, as if to assure himself of the fact, and said, "I see they do; but I can't."

The Egotist's Note-book.

A MAN of about forty had been insulted at his club by a young swell, who was a bit of a fire-eater.

"Why," said a friend to him, "do you allow yourself to be insulted every day by such a youngster as that?"

"He is too young to notice," was the reply; "stay till he gets my age, and then I'll challenge him."

A gentleman, returning home the other day, found the servant trampling the fragments of a valuable thermometer under his feet.

"What have you broken there—the thermometer?"

"Yes, sir," replied the servant, triumphantly. "I couldn't bear to see that thing changing the weather every day. We shall have some regular weather now!"

"Yes, gentlemen of the jury," exclaimed a counsel, finishing his address, "the accused has pushed deception to its furthest limits towards my unfortunate clients. Not only has he inveigled them into his net by publishing the most glaring falsehoods; but, with profound treachery, he has secured their money by practising the grossest artifices. He actually paid them the first coupon!"

And the learned gentleman did not seem to be aware that this was one of the commonest tricks of crafty financiers.

In a ballet that was being performed at a well-known theatre, one of the ballet girls had to advance to the footlights, and exclaim—"What a monster!" and then retire. Just before this part was reached, one of the other girls came up to the other one who had to speak the words, and said—

"I wish you'd let me take that little bit to-night."

"Why?"

"Because there's a friend of mine in the stalls that I want to speak my mind to."

A lunatic, who had made his escape from an asylum, entered a forest, where he found a wood-cutter lying asleep. Seizing the hatchet which was on the ground, the madman severed the poor fellow's head from his body at a blow.

In the evening he was discovered by his keepers seated on the trunk of a tree watching his victim, and breaking out every now and then into a loud laugh.

"What are you doing?" exclaimed one of the keepers to him.

"I'm just waiting for him to wake up," replied the idiot. "Won't he look a figure when he finds that he hasn't got his head upon his shoulders?"

A lady, who was very fond of gesticulating when she spoke, was making some purchases in a shop, when she upset the ink from a stand which was upon the counter. Although she had covered herself with the ink, she uttered a thousand apologies.

Still gesticulating wildly, she shook her dress, and so smothered the lady on the other side the counter, who, however, quietly remarked—

"See, madame, I am covered with ink, but I say nothing."

"You don't complain? Certainly not. It's your ink."

And the indignant customer swept grandly out of the shop.

Here is a long sentence of thirty-two words, which some ingenious person has got up with the letters found in the word "maiden":—Ida, a maiden, a mean man named Ned Dean, and Media, a mad dame, made me mend a die and a dime, and mind a mine in a dim den in Maine.

A rich money-lender—a Jew, of course—lost his purse at one of the Paris railway stations, just as he was on the point of starting for the United States, whither he was compelled to go on most important and pressing business. The purse contained about one thousand pounds in notes and gold. On his return, some six weeks afterwards, he learnt that the purse had been found, and was deposited at the lost property office. He went there, and the purse was handed to him. With a trembling hand, and his heart beating with joy, he opened it, and carefully examined the contents.

"Pardon me," he said, when he had finished counting, "there's something missing."

"I believe not," replied the official. "What is it?"

"Vat is it! Vy, vere's de interest?"

Whilst waiting for a train at the Charing-cross station, young Addlewit chatted with a friend whom he had picked up. Addlewit had a first-class ticket in his hand.

"I must leave you now," said the other, as the train was coming in; "I travel second class."

"Why don't you go first?"

"Because, you see, the difference in the fare is fourpence, and as I go up and down four and five times a week, that would come to a pretty round sum at the end of one year."

Struck with the wisdom of this observation, Addlewit tore up his first-class ticket, and rushed off instantly to get a second.

The British workman—

"Yes, Mr. Parson, your religion is all very well, but it allows only one day of rest in the week. I want a religion that 'll let me rest all the week!"

"Never was anybody so unfortunate as I am," said a cook, talking to some of her friends. "At the place where I am, they leave all the letters about, and, there, I can't read a word!"

A lady writes:—"Last Monday forenoon a well-dressed woman, with a companion waiting near the gate, presented herself at the door of my house, saying that she had called for the washing. Finding the woman a strange one, but not thinking anything could be wrong, our servant gives the applicant the very information she wants by saying 'From Mrs. Turner's?' to which a ready assent is of course given, and linen to the value of about £4 is at once handed over to a thief. At the same time a cart happens to

be passing, and the driver exchanges signals with the woman at the door. Some two hours later the family laundress, Mrs. Turner, herself calls, and the whole scheme is apparent." Moral—Be on the *qui vive*; but the people won't go to that house again.

Does any one remember Dickens's wind, that met several other winds in the same mind as itself, and went out to sea and made a night of it? One is reminded of it by the following:—"At the Russian camp at Plevna the news was received with indescribable enthusiasm, and it was determined to celebrate the day. The bombardment of Plevna was opened, and was continued for several hours." The news was the victory in Armenia. A nice way to make a day of it!

According to their custom, Hunt's Playing Card Company have sent specimens of their new patterns for the season, among which is a pack with a representation of two eyes from a peacock's train, that is simply perfect as a specimen of artistic beauty. A novelty just introduced is the *petite* enamelled-faced card. This is furnished with rounded corners, and is rather less than the usual size. These cards are very pleasant to handle and deal, and will doubtless come largely into use.

A few days ago Mehemet Ali told an English correspondent that he had been dismissed because he would not consent to break his neck by running his head against a stone wall. Suleiman Pacha, as was shown by his conduct in the Shipka Pass, has a liking for stone walls, and has gained promotion by dashing half of his army to pieces against one, with no compensating advantage; while Mehemet Ali, who at least won some victories, is cashiered.

Who would have thought that ants were such little Sybarites in their drinking? Sir John Lubbock says:—"The food of ants consists of insects, great numbers of which they destroy; of honey, honeydew, and fruit; indeed, scarcely any animal or sweet substance comes amiss to them. Some species, such, for instance, as the small brown garden ant, ascend bushes in search of aphides. The ant then taps the aphid gently with her antennæ, and the aphid emits a drop of sweet fluid, which the ant drinks."

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHARLES GLEBELEY had fought long and often with sorrow; he had ministered comfort to others, and whispered words of resignation and hope; and now a greater sorrow than had ever fallen to his share was upon him. But he battled with his grief; he fought with it, and beat it down; though at one time it had whispered to him of death and rest from earthly trouble, and maddened him so that he could have cursed God and died. But the battle was to the weak; the grief was crushed down; and after a month's severe illness he rose again to bear his burden, and undertake the new duty that had fallen to his lot—a duty that brought with it rest, peace, and consolation. He found rest and happiness in his new duty, for he had still something to live for—something to gaze upon in remembrance of her he had lost—who had left him so soon. He set earnestly again to his work; but the events of the past two months had aged him ten years in appearance, and made the threads of silver lie thickly in his hair.

As the child grew, the hours that he spent at home were always in her society, and she soon became a companion to the widower. There was plenty of kind feeling displayed by those who knew his troubles, and it was during these early days that the child became strongly attached to simple, motherly Mrs. Henderson, and passed many an hour at the Mill Cottage. People said that the child was old-fashioned, and had ways beyond her years; and they had some authority for their remarks, for little Madeline was quaint and maidenly far more than her age warranted. She almost began life as a miniature woman, and it was at first even ludicrous to see the tiny girl presiding at her father's table, the little hands barely able to lift the tea-pot, yet every act performed with the gravity taught by constant habit. But time sped on, and at the period of our story Madeline was fast passing into womanhood. A graceful picture now met the widower's gaze when directed towards the head of his table; and looking down the long vista of the past, memory would bring up many a recollection of another who had for too short a time sat in the self-same place.

Madeline Glebeley possessed a countenance that, as people who puff say, ought to have been seen to be thoroughly appreciated. She was not, like the heroines of our crack novels, lustrous in her beauty, neither was she dazzling, nor entrancing, nor bewitching, nor possessed of the other attributes necessary for the perfection of loveliness—a state of being, by the way, in which one gets to have but little faith as the wrinkles come; for, to extend a little the description already given, Madeline was simply a clear-skinned maiden, a bonnie English girl, with a blush-rose cheek, a set of white teeth, and a nose of unclassical shape. To anglicise our neighbours' comprehensive term, hers was an "altogether" which would make any one who knew her set her down as a most agreeable girl. After being for an hour in her company, a stranger generally left ask-

ing himself the question whether she were pretty or not; and if it be reasonable or allowable to treat of female beauty in the same language as would be applied to colour, one might say that she was of an exquisite neutral tint, where nothing was striking, but all softened and harmonious.

But, handsome or plain, half an hour in the society of Madeline was sufficient to drive away all thought of her personal charms, for they were quite eclipsed by the mental beauties she possessed, rendering her a companion of so engrossing a nature, that one can easily fancy a young fellow like Frank, or his old schoolfellow, imagining her name to be written upon his heart. She had long been the hope and stay of her father, and proud was the Rector of the feeling which existed. In her childhood she had been his consolation in many a bitter hour of tribulation; and now in her early womanhood, simple and unaffected, in all the freshness of her young and guileless heart, her father felt that he had indeed been blessed, and asked pardon for many a murmur and despairing thought that had come upon him in the bitterness of his soul.

Father and daughter were now, as ever, inseparable; and though the former upbraided himself for his selfishness, yet his heart ached at the thought of sharing the treasure with another. He had been her playmate in childhood, and in maturer years almost her sole companion. They had walked together, and gathered the wild flowers of the field and wood; listened to the song of bird and bee; dipped together in the formidable-looking science of botany, and spent their evenings in preparing and drying specimens; while by assiduous care he had educated his child to a pitch rather beyond that attained to in the modern boarding school. 'Tis true that her ideas upon fancy work were rather meagre; but then her fingers were, for all that, nimble with the needle, and were besides well up in many little matters usually left to the cook; for Madeline was somebody in the kitchen, and had studied her Murray rather deeply. In fact, to such an extent had matters proceeded, that the rector was wont to find fault with pastry which had not been built by the taper fingers—I forgot to say she had long white taper fingers—of his daughter; and he declared that no one else could make anything fit to eat. From which it may be inferred that, clergyman though he might be, the Reverend Charles Glebeley was not devoid of prejudice, but, like mortals generally, possessed of his failings.

Of course it will immediately be seen that Madeline was not a lady in the conventional sense of the word, or she would never have been guilty of such coarseness as letting herself be seen enveloped in a large check gingham apron, and with hands and arms—such plump little dimply arms—all covered with sticky dough and flour, patting, poking, and punching away at a great panful of undeveloped bread; busy as a bee, eyes sparkling, and nose bloomed with a patch of flour, placed there when a rude fly had invaded its sanctity. Or in the golden broiling days, hot and red-faced over a charcoal stove, stirring away at a brazen vessel bubbling full of saccharine and fruity treasures, ever and anon skimming the surface with a great wooden spoon,

and depositing the contents in an attendant basin, which afterwards, filled with milk, was partaken of with gusto. Then, too, the dairy! Now, I don't mean to say that she scoured the churn, or made the milk tins glisten like silver; but such duties were executed under her superintendence, while the rich yellow cream, sent in first as milk by those Alderney dames of the bovine race, Brindy and Buttercup, was always removed from the wide pan by Madeline's own fingers; and when Betty had churned this yellow cream into golden butter, the same taper fingers made it up into most inviting little pats whereon the acorn stood out prominently, and then placed them in a parsley nest to adorn the breakfast table.

And yet of an afternoon the maiden would read French, Italian, or German authors to her father, and in the evening soothe him with the solemn strains of Beethoven, or touch him to the heart with Mendelssohn's speaking melodies, or Haydn's joyous, soul-inspiring airs, till he would take down his flute, and advancing to the piano, try to take the top notes of the treble, and end by invariably spoiling the effect of the piece his child was playing. And Madeline had plenty of reading aloud, for the Rector would complain that his eyes were not what they used to be, and, comfortably ensconced in his easy chair after a busy sick-visiting or gardening day, he would drop off fast asleep after listening to the first few paragraphs—howbeit all his solid reading was done before mid-day.

The Rector used to say that he knew of nothing more agreeable to a bodily and mentally tired man than listening to a sweet voice rendering the thoughts of a good author, while the best time was after a late dinner, and the seat an easy chair—when the evening fire just began to be comfortable, and it was too soon to ring for the tea urn, or what is less genteel, but decidedly better, the well-polished, saucy-looking little copper kettle that sits so jauntily upon the hob, steaming and singing away, as it beats time with its own lid, while the fire glistens and dances in its shining rotundity, and all appears so thoroughly English and comfortable. It was then, he said, pleasant to listen to a sweet voice, guided by thought and mind whose capacity grasped the author's meaning, and thoroughly took up his subject—it was pleasant then, with eyes half closed, and the cares of life put for a while upon the mental shelf. The words and sentences came welling forth, and the subject soon started the mind off upon a train of reasoning, and then back it came with a jump; but only to depart again, and return with rather less energy. And this kept on being repeated until the already wearied mind in its reasoning upon the subject somehow became entangled, and was only extricated from its pleasant embarrassment by the next words that were heard—words which dissolved the spell in an instant—

"Tea is ready."

"Ah," said the Rector, "it's very pleasant to be read to of an evening."

"I dare say it is," said his old friend the Squire; "but I'd rather have a pipe."

But the Rector did not smoke.

Madeline often spent the whole afternoon reading

to the Rector; but of an evening she always knew when to leave off, and it scarcely ever took more than two pages and a half to perfect the listener's somno-thoughtful state, when the book would be laid down, and the lamp shaded until the little pendule pointed to five minutes to nine, when the pot was filled, and after due law had been given to it for drawing, the thoughtful one was aroused by the magic words—

"Tea is ready."

There was a pleasant little fiction over this matter, for the Rector would never allow himself to believe that he had been asleep, neither was he willing that any one else should think so, consequently there was a tacit understanding between father and daughter, and no one was the worse for the little bit of self-deceit.

CHAPTER XX.—A SPICY HORSE.

LIKE the little boys who run about in August with an oyster-shell, the Edgeton people said it was "only once a year," and thoroughly gave themselves up to the delights of the time. There were joys for all at Edgeton races, for gingerbread came out in all its metallic-coated lustre, and broke out all along the High-street pavement in long booths, full to the summit of kings and queens, and those extraordinary birds that did not, after all, taste so very palatable when purchased. All the fun of the fair was there: the principal funny things being considered to be crackers, scratchers, and cayenne-flavoured biters. Grantham biscuits in plenty, and nuts to such an extent that road and pavement soon underwent a complete macadamization of shells, upon which the foot crunched in a way decidedly not agreeable. Photography, rifle galleries in the sheet-iron-tube sense of the word, swings, roundabouts, shows, knock-'em-downs, and preparations at every public-house for knock-'em-ups, from the quantity of bad liquor in store for those who would drink. Altogether, Edgeton was in a state of high fever; for upon these annual *fête* days, from a country-bumpkin sort of a place it became the resort of all the world and his wife; and, in addition, the above worthies brought with them the whole of their family. Strange children they had, too—men with short-cropped hair and greasy periwinkle curls in front of each ear; men with hair that it would have been an act of charity to shear; men with low repulsive countenances, surmounted by shabby, scampish caps—caps which bore the appearance of being the offspring of a dissolute London muffin and an abandoned Scotch bonnet. These head-dresses were worn night-cap fashion, and drawn down tightly over the ears, adding but little to the personal appearance in a reputable point of view, on account of their too suggestiveness of the pillory and cropped organs. This class of gentlemen affected tight cord trousers, clumsy drab overcoats, and thick white or spotted neckcloths. Their voices were harsh and rough, and they smoked a great deal, expectorated a greater deal, and swore the greatest deal. The Ethiopian brothers shone there, too, in sable lustre; while, evidently belonging to the same party, came a youth got up to resemble an Irishman, the typical "Paddy from Cork," armed with a

formidable bit of a stick. Divers men with greasy packs of cards loitered about, and sometimes in a corner did a little quiet bit of cut and shuffle, as though by way of practice. Then there was the man with the two pillars and the ball that ought either to knock both down or pass between without touching, but would do neither; the man in the greasy hat, with the wet clay, stick, and button; the man with the iron pins and rings; and all the rest of the world's children who look upon the public at large as a fat sheep with a good fleece—men who live upon such events as the one now, in accordance with the annual custom, about to come off at Edgeton, for it was the day of the races.

Ragged men with ragged voices ran about proclaiming the event, by shouting in husky tones, "Horthentic carts with hall the names and colours," or seeking customers for their spiky lead pencils; the county paper proclaimed the event in an advertisement, headed by a cut of three impossible spidery horses, urged by jockeys of similar mould, making impossible strides past the winning-post; the inhabitants from miles round proclaimed it too, by hurrying and driving in from every part of the district, in every description of cart, car, tumbril, chaise, and carriage, laden with hampers and baskets for the due furnishing of internal feasts, while the eyes were satiated with the sights around and the emulation of the running horses. For people thought as much of the little officers' races at Edgeton as the Londoners and country at large do of Epsom, Ascot, Doncaster, or Newmarket. What was it to Edgeton that the horses did not gallop so swiftly, or that so many did not start? Edgeton thought that nothing out of the place could compare with their races; for there was the Town Plate, the Ladies' Plate, County Stakes, the Subscription Purse, and the Officers' Plate, all to be well run for, and worthy of every amount of patronage. And besides there was the race ball to conclude the day's proceedings, under the patronage of the worshipful the mayor (Mr. Jones, late grocer and dealer in glass and china)—Potsherd Jones, as he was popularly called—and the officers of the garrison; and a splendid turn-out it generally was—at least the Edgeton people said so, and, what with the expectation of races and ball, went into a perfect fever of excitement.

Of course the epidemic used to spread as far as Waveley, and a party had arranged to start in good time from the Hall Farm.

Mrs. Vaughan undertook the task, and won over the rector, who consented to Madeline forming one of the party; but Mrs. Vaughan was not satisfied—given an inch she wanted an ell, and at last persuaded the rector to try and obtain Miss Newman from beneath her brother's protection for a few hours. But at the first hint the Rev. Augustus looked so horrified, that the rector was dismayed, and changed the subject to blankets and coals in a moment. If an epileptic fit had been threatening, the poor curate could not have looked worse; and consequently, to her great disappointment, Annie Newman was not going; but she declared she would come over to the Hall to dinner if they asked her, which, as a matter of course, they did.

Tom Phipps came down over-night, in a new drab hat and zephyr overcoat, which, in combination with the floating beauties of a blue veil, he considered would be something startling to the nerves of the Edgetonites. All the previous day, too, Mrs. Vaughan had been busy making preparations, which evidently meant something to eat; and whatever the preparations might be, they were snugly packed up in a vast hamper, which, in its turn, was secured behind the dog-cart destined to convey three of the gentlemen of the party; while, in the roomy old four-wheeler were to be deposited the Squire, Mrs. Vaughan, Alice, and Madeline.

The vehicles were at the door on the bright autumn morning—for October had set in, and the day was as clear as nature loves to make those farewells of the bright sunny times, ere the wintry blasts and chilly rains make bare wood and grove. The trees were gorgeous in their late tints, and mingled with the dark-hued firs were oaks whose crowns shone with a golden lustre, as though the summer sunshine, that had been wont to bathe them with its glory, was yet lingering in the foliage of the forest monarchs.

By special arrangement, Tom Phipps was to "handle the ribbons," and drive his two country friends as soon as they were out of the village; and upon the exodus of the party from the house, the whole of the packing and arranging of muslin and silk skirt being finished, and all in their places, Frank, who was now driving, reined back, so as to give the Squire and the ladies precedence.

"No, thanky," said the old gentleman; "we'll follow your lead; we sober folks will come on quietly. And I say, Steve, as you are behind, no trespassing upon the hamper. Just keep your eye upon him, Frank; he always was vicious about food."

A laugh followed the old gentleman's sally; but Stephen did not even smile, for he looked glum and disappointed; and altogether, in spite of fits of gaiety, he was not quite the light-hearted young fellow of a few months before.

But this was not the morning for harbouring dull feelings. Frank touched the horse with the whip; there was a wave of the hand to the sober party; and in a few minutes a turn of the lane separated the excursionists.

"I say, Tom," said Stephen, lighting a cigar, "do you know why we are sent on first?"

"No," said that worthy, taking the reins and spitting out a corner of the gauze veil which had blown into his mouth. "Why was it?"

"Because the governor said he would not be seen in company with such a 'mawkin' as you made of yourself with that veil."

"Gammon!" said Tom; "why it's just the very thing."

"Perhaps so," said Frank; "but it's mighty little we barbarians in the country think of such embellishments."

"But I say, seriously, you know," said Tom, "did he say so, really?"

"Fact," said Stephen, examining the fastenings of the hamper.

Tom Phipps handed the reins back to Frank, and mounting a cigar, procured a light from the back seat.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, mournfully, "must it be so! Descend, oh aerial spirit of the race, and I'll consign thee to the nether shades. And now, my charms behold unveiled."

Saying which he detached the obnoxious gauze from his hat, and consigned it to the nether shades—that is to say, put it his pocket.

"There," cried Tom, when he had finished, "give us hold of the reins again, and let's go on. Off we go, Sprightly!"

And off they did go—especially Stephen, who nearly went off into the road; for he occupied rather an uncomfortable position behind, displaying a strong inclination to shoot off at every turn; for the back seat of a dog-cart is certainly not a comfortable place, especially when that seat happens to be inclined, through the horse in the shafts being considerably too large for the vehicle; and, worse still, when the occupier's legs are sticking out at right angles, in consequence of a large-hamper occupying their place upon the footboard. However, Stephen managed to hold on tightly, and sucked away at his cigar with the greatest of *nonchalance*, while the horse went along at a pace decidedly faster than a canter.

"Hold fast behind there!" shouted Tom, bursting out with what was meant for an imitation of a post-horn.

And then pulling up at the toll-gate, where, the legal demand having been satisfied, he inserted the ticket, carter-fashion, in the band of his hat, and then started off again at anything but a pleasant pace.

Now, this was all very well for a time; and young men of two or three and twenty are not generally squeamish about a little danger—generally regarding it, more or less, as the salt of life; but as they drew nearer to the scene of the coming spectacle, obstructions in the road became frequent; and the consequence was that Master Tom nearly drove right over a basket-chaise, and also managed to rasp the wheel of a neighbour in passing, who, growing very irate, shook his whip at Stephen in a threatening way. But that gentleman merely replied with a mild puff of smoke.

At last, though, matters began to grow serious; and, in obedience to a telegraphic nudge from Stephen, Frank tried to relieve the reckless charioteer—the modern Jehu—of the reins of office, saying—

"By your leave, Mr. Phipps; for I have no desire to give up that very minute chance I have of becoming senior wrangler this next year."

"Get out!" said Tom, indignantly, as he stoutly resisted all such interference; and he became the more determined upon finding that Stephen did not care to press the matter as to who should hold dominion over the horse.

"Never mind, Frank—let him drive," said Stephen.

"Thank you," said Frank; "but I have no wish to have my vertebral column dislocated; and over we must go if he keeps on driving. I tell you what,

Tom, if you don't give up the reins I'll pitch you off the box."

But Tom drove on; only replying to the threat by sending a long puff of smoke in his companion's face, at the same time making the horse swerve, and driving over a hillock of road-scrappings—nearly casting the party out of the vehicle.

This proved too much for the equanimity of Stephen, who now joined with Frank in trying to secure the reins; but in vain, for Tom held to them all the tighter, and whipped the horse up into a gallop.

"Now, Frank, lay hold," said Stephen.

As, seizing Tom Phipps by the shoulder and collar, with a sharp tug he drew him backward, till his head rested upon the hamper and his heels appeared in the air; but, unfortunately, in one of the involuntary kicks he gave, caused by the pain of resting his back upon the iron-work which separated the seats, he gave such a jerk to the near rein that the horse turned sharply on one side, ran the wheel into the ditch, laid the dog-cart right over upon its side, and pitched the occupants into the newly ploughed field beyond the hedge; while, after a few desperate kicks and plunges, the horse breaking loose, turned round and set off at a quiet swing trot back towards his stable, and to give comfortable information to the inmates of the coming chaise respecting the mishap which had taken place.

Having thus disposed of the horse, it will, perhaps, be as well to return to the dog-cart, which, with the exception of wanting a new pair of shafts, lay comparatively uninjured; not so, however, was the drab hat of Mr. Tom Phipps; for as this gentleman sat upon the newly turned furrows of the field, he was engaged in extricating his head from the crushed and bemired "latest fashion," which had, however, saved his seat of knowledge from a nasty bump.

As for Stephen Vaughan, he had gone more through the hedge than over it, and displayed two or three ugly rents in his garments; while Frank, the student, fell as he should have fallen—in a sedentary position. Fortunately, no one was much hurt; and the first question discussed was—were they in a fit state to go on to the races?

Tom, though gazing ruefully upon his hat, exclaimed—

"Go, yes! I should think so. I came down on purpose; and—there!" he exclaimed, elbowing his battered head-case into shape, pushing in projections and rubbing out bruises—"that's better. Come along, my boys; this world's all vanity, and—no, that isn't it—all bosh and bother of body."

And then he commenced cissing and fizzing like an ostler, as he rubbed the dirt off the habiliments of Frank; while Stephen, upon taking off his torn overcoat, looked scarcely the worse for the accident.

"I say," said Tom, screwing up his face, "I hope no bottles are broken. How about the prog?"

"Why, you'll have to carry it," growled Stephen.

"To be sure," said Frank, rather ill-humouredly. "The little beast has been the cause of all the bother."

"Sir," said Tom, fiercely, "did you apply that zoological remark to me? May I inquire whether it was intended as an insult, or—"

"There, jump out of this. Get over the hedge," said Frank, who was picking and eating blackberries; "here are the ladies."

And directly after, the Squire pulled up his sound and willing steed.

"Oh, Stephen, how you have frightened us!" cried Mrs. Vaughan; while Frank went to the back seat, to set Madeline and Alice at rest as to the accident.

"Well," said the Squire again, "what's the matter, eh?"

"Why, sir," said Stephen, hesitating, "you see, Pepper took fright and bolted."

"Pepper took fright and bolted!" sneered the Squire. "Do you think I am going to believe in that animal taking fright at anything but the prospect of going without his customary corn? Here, Tom Phipps, Frank, what's the matter? Who was driving when this happened?"

"Well, sir," said Tom, clearing his throat, and speaking very obsequiously, "you see—"

And here Tom stopped again.

"No, I don't," said the Squire, testily. "There, for goodness' sake, tell me how it all happened, Frank."

"Well, sir," said the last-appealed to, "Tom Phipps was driving—"

"There, that will do," said the Squire, interrupting; "I'm quite satisfied. I don't want to know any more, without it is how you two great fellows could be such fools as to let him."

Tom Phipps pulled off his hat, and made such a grimace of offended dignity as sent Mrs. Vaughan almost into convulsions.

"Are any of you hurt?" said the Squire.

"No," said Frank. "I think we have all escaped pretty well."

"My new hat," said Tom, suggestively, as he turned the injured "Down" round and round.

"Pity it wasn't your head!" growled Stephen, who felt himself somewhat hot and aggrieved with the Pepper dose the squire had given him.

Stephen's remark and Tom's appealing tone caused a general laugh at the stained wreck of the "best felt," much to the discomfiture of the luckless wearer, who seemed rather uncomfortable in his mind.

"Well, what's to be done?" said the Squire. "Pepper has about reached home by this time."

"Oh! we'll fasten the hamper on behind, and then walk," said Frank.

A suggestion that was at once acted upon, and then the chaise started—the trio carrying the cushions of the dog-cart into the nearest cottage, and then following on foot.

They reached the town in about half an hour, when Tom's first proceeding was to visit the hatter's shop, whence he soon after emerged in a puce flannel cap with a white border, leaving his damaged hat to be re-shaped.

"Neat thing, aint it?" said Tom. "Colour's good."

"Very," said Frank, drily. "I should put the veil on now, I think."

"No, come now," cried Stephen, alarmed; "none of that in the town."

"Wouldn't do," said Tom, innocently. "You see, it wants the height of the hat to carry it off."

A sharp ten minutes' walk brought them alongside of the chaise, which the Squire had manœuvred into a capital position for viewing the proceedings of the day. And now, upon a minor scale, the ground presented all the attributes of Epsom Downs. That which had been visible in the town in the morning was here again upon the race-course; but very strongly recruited. Men were already yelling out their odds upon the various horses, or "Agen the field bar one," and offering the best of chances to people who would bet—offering, with almost unheard-of generosity, fortunes to those who would accept the chances thrown in their way. If there were nuts in the town earlier in the morning they were here now, with men whose mission it seemed to be to furnish all people with the shelly delicacies, forcing them upon all comers, and evidently labouring under the impression that the human jaws were designed expressly for the purpose of cracking shells filled with a brown dust, the bitterest of the bitter. Vehicles were ranged as closely as possible to the grand stand, and along by the line of posts, every spot of ground which would not hold a carriage, chaise, gig, or cart, being filled up with flesh—pushing, squeezing, and grumbling flesh—from amongst which arose the constant pettillation of cracking nuts.

JOHN ROBINSON, of Appleby, rose, under the patronage of Sir James Lowther, from being a footboy in his service, to sit in Parliament for Westmoreland and Harwick. He was made, by Pitt, Surveyor-General of his Majesty's Woods and Forests. When he died there were found in his writing-desk upwards of 300 letters written to him by George III. Mr. Atkinson relates of Robinson:—"The King was once obliged to cross Wyke Farm (Robinson lived at Wyke House, near Brentford), when, on riding up to one of the gates, he found it locked. He hailed a man close by, but the fellow seemed lazy, or unwilling to do as he was bid. 'Come, come,' said the King, 'open the gate.' 'Nay, ye maun gang aboot,' was the answer. 'Gang aboot?' replied the King; 'open the gate, man, I'm the King.' 'Why, ye may be,' said the chap, 'but ye maun gang aboot, if ye er t' King.' And sure enough the King was forced to gang aboot, which, in plain words, means that he was obliged to go round the whole enclosure of Osterley Park. Robinson came home in the afternoon, and hearing of the King's disappointment, instantly ordered horses to his carriage, and drove post haste to Kew. He was admitted, as usual, without ceremony; and his Majesty laughingly greeted him, thus—'Ah, Robinson, I see you are in distress. Be of good cheer; I wish I had such a fine fellow in my service as 'auld gang aboot.' Tell him from me that I shall always be glad to see him. Robinson was at his ease, and 'auld gang aboot' very soon and very often found a more direct path than around Osterley Park to Kew Palace, where he was always met with kindness. The King never saw Robinson afterwards without inquiring affectionately after 'auld gang aboot.'"

Two-Horn the First.

YOU probably do not know much of the character of the African rhinoceros. Let it be my work to try and enlighten you. There are two or three varieties in Africa, and one of them is the most vicious and objectionable quadruped under the sun. Of my adventure with one of these creatures I will tell you later on.

I was on a shooting trip in South Africa, some years ago, and had met with fair sport at small game, but was disappointed at not coming across any of the larger species I had heard so much of. It was therefore with much pleasure I accepted an invitation to accompany a friend who was going surveying in the wilds; and, with a good commissariat and plentiful supply of ammunition on board, we had soon left the last nomadic boer's shanty behind.

Our *cortège* consisted of a light waggon—which my two shooting horses condescended to draw—my friend's waggon and sixteen oxen, his horse, a Hottentot driver (old Willem), a bushman leader, a half-breed for cook and "handy man," my own Zulu boy, and five dogs.

The latter deserve a word *en passant*. They were two pointers, Don and Jess, the progeny of an English bitch I had brought out, which had fallen a victim to climate; two young dogs crossed between a kangaroo hound and English greyhound, very fast and with good pluck, Paddy and Scot; and a boer hound, which I christened Rebel, under the following circumstances:—

On a former trip I had lost two dogs, and took a fancy to this one from seeing him hold a young ox by the nose in most approved style. He belonged to a transport driver, who did not wish to part with him, and candidly told me he was a savage; but I prevailed on him to sell. I got him to put a collar on the dog, and fasten him behind my waggon, and when we separated the poor brute fought like a fiend to get loose, and let himself be dragged for miles. I did not let him off the chain for two days, and he had already bitten one of the boys. On the third day, I let him off for a while, and was putting on his collar again, when he tackled me. It was a case of who was to be master; so, having a Kaffir stick handy, I got hold of the collar, and, though he was as strong as a calf and slippery as an eel, managed to get him down. I then pounded him till I was tired and ashamed of myself, for his eyes turned green, and he spun round like a top when I let him go. The boys said I had killed him; but after two or three buckets of water thrown over him, he came round again. He had no bones broken, though I had raised an immense bump on his head, which turned out to be one of veneration for me. By treating him kindly, and feeding him myself, we soon became good friends. I had had him now more than a year; and, though slow, I never knew him lose a wounded buck, and he had killed a hyæna single-handed—no small feat. He was the best dog I ever had, but never safe with strangers.

But I have wandered from my subject. The boers had warned us of the dangers of the lion velt, and old Willem harped continually on the same

string. There was a soreness between him and lions, at least on his side, as he had been nearly seized by one which, according to his own account, he valiantly did slay. For two days we had been travelling through a country very scarce of water, and been obliged to make long "treks," principally at night. The third day the oxen were getting very tired, and in the afternoon I saddled up to look for a halting place where there was a supply of the precious fluid.

Our route lay towards some low hills, where we were told we should find water, and where we were to camp for a day or two. About sundown I espied them, and found a large vley or swamp on the farther side. I hastened back with the good news, but found that the oxen had discovered the fact that there was water ahead, as their quickened pace showed. It was late before we halted for the night, and, after taking the precaution of filling our pots and kettles, let the thirsty oxen drink their fill. We had perforce outspanned close to the swamp, and the mosquitoes fell upon us in a solid mass; and though we, under the canvas, escaped pretty well, the niggers had a lively time of it, to judge by their exclamations under the waggon.

My first salutation after turning out for early coffee—a luxury only to be fully appreciated on the trek—was in Dutch from old Willem—

"Good morning, baas; this is a regular lion vley."

"All right, Willem," I said; "your master is going to stay here a day or two, and you and I will look them up."

"God forbid!" quoth Willem.

We moved the camp to higher ground, to get away from the "musqueteers;" and, being Sunday—which is always a *dies non* in Africa, except in urgent circumstances, such as a river rising—prepared to take things easy. By this I mean cleaning guns, airing bedding skins, &c. Game had been scarce lately; in fact, we had seen nothing but a few steinbok and ostriches—the latter very wild. Our larder was consequently low, and both dogs and niggers looked as if they would be none the worse for a good feed.

I was taking the guns to pieces, to wash them, when my friend proposed one of us should go and slay a buck. As he was not very well, I volunteered, and took the only gun that had not been unshipped—a heavy rifle, carrying a bullet of eight to the pound. Lucky for me I did so.

The hills consisted of a low range of ironstone, with spruys (watercourses) running from them into the swamp, which was a large one, about four miles long, and from half a mile to a mile in width, covered with reeds twenty feet high, at this time of year quite yellow and dry, and affording impenetrable covert. It was a hazy morning, and the mist still hung about. I took a long look round with a powerful telescope, and at length discovered a herd of game feeding on the farther side of a spruyt about a mile and a half distant. I marked them for my prey, and determined to stalk them by keeping close to the swamp, and then ascending the bed of the spruyt, by which means I expected to get an easy pot shot. I told my boy to tie up the dogs and saddle a horse, ready,

the moment he heard the report or saw the smoke, to gallop up, to follow in case of my only wounding, or carry back the game.

My friend, after wishing me good luck, turned in to have another snooze, and I started off at a Connaught trot.

From the junction of the spruyt with the swamp to where I saw the herd feeding, I calculated to be about two miles; so, after going over a mile I ventured on a peep, and found the herd had moved towards the swamp, and were considerably nearer than I thought. The spruyt was about thirty feet wide, with a channel about four feet wide, and from six to eight feet deep in the centre, worn by the rains; between this and the banks, which were about seven feet high, there was a wide space to walk, covered with reeds and high grass.

I was plodding on, when I heard a noise in the reeds behind me, and I thought it was my boy following with the horse, having mistaken my orders. I inwardly promised him "pickles," and kept putting my hand behind me to stop him; but, the noise continuing, I turned round, and saw a sight which instinctively brought me down on one knee, with the rifle to my shoulder and my heart in my mouth at the same time. There, within ten yards of me, stood the king of the desert.

I had no time to think, further than to realize the fact that a full-grown lion was close upon me. It is no use trying to describe my feelings—I simply had none; neither fear, surprise, nor any other. When I faced about, he lay down and put his head between his paws, eyeing me intently, and I him. I had now the bed of the spruyt on my left, the camp also being on that side. I knew I would have to fire, and glanced on one side to see how deep the channel was, involuntarily full-cocking the rifle at the same time. Whether it was having the human eye removed from him, or the click of the hammer coming to full cock, I know not; but, on looking again, I saw he meant mischief by the flicking of his tail and rising of his hind quarters. I drew the foresight as fine as I could between his eyes, squeezing the trigger at the same time. A second before I fired, he raised his head. I heard a smothered sob, or rather grunt; and, under cover of the smoke, which hung, threw myself into the bed of the watercourse, and ran like a man till I came to a place where I could climb out the other side.

I loaded as quickly as I could; and it was a ticklish moment, as the reeds prevented me from seeing him. He was making a fearful row, and I did not know any moment but that he might be on me. I got out of the spruyt altogether, and saw the boy coming full tilt with all the dogs. All this time the lion was making a horrid din in the reeds, and I half hoped the heavy ball had crippled him. The dogs went into the reeds in a body; but, with the exception of Rebel, came out separately, each choosing a different point of the compass for his exit. Don and Jess never stopped, I heard, till they got under the waggon. Rebel kept baying him, and the other two dogs took heart of grace and went in again, and between the lot a nice noise was raised.

My friend now galloped up. Old Willem had been watching the herd with the telescope to tell

the boy when to start, also with an eye to the flesh-pots depending on the shot; and when he saw the smoke rise in the reeds, a long way from the game, sung out—

"The baas has fired in the spruyt; it is a lion."

Luckily W. himself thought it strange, and turned out. I told my boy to get back; but, like all his nation, he was a sportsman at heart, and begged to be allowed to stay and see the fun out. As the dogs kept baying in one place, we concluded he was crippled; so we decided on the rather risky course of both going in to give him the *coup de grâce*, and left the boy with the horses. The uproar going on was a caution, and on going in we found the lion only able to use his front paws—but how efficiently a rent in Rebel's side showed. On the dogs seeing us they rushed in with fresh vigour, and it was some little time before I could fire, W. standing by to cover me. When I did he made a spasmodic effort, and rolled over into the bed of the gully on his back, stone dead, with a bullet in his head. The rest of the boys had come up, and cautiously approached to have a look, with the exception of Willem, who stood at a respectful distance, protesting against anyone going near for half an hour, and spinning a yarn about a lion, seemingly dead, springing up and killing two men. There was some sense in what he said; but my last ball was too near his brain-pan for further mischief on his part.

The dogs were lying down licking their wounds, which were, luckily, slight, with the exception of one about four inches long in Rebel's side, which I sewed up afterwards. He licked my hand when I had finished, but I firmly believe he would have rent any one else in pieces who had ventured to touch him.

My first shot had entered just under the lower jaw when the lion raised his head, regularly raking him, and touching his spine near the kidneys. Had he not been thus crippled, none of the dogs would have got off as they did, if no worse damage had been done. He was a full-grown male, in splendid condition, with a mane as black as night, and teeth and claws very suggestive of sudden death.

We concluded he had been stalking the same herd as I was after, and followed me out of curiosity more than anything else, as, had he meant mischief at first, he could have wiped me out with a stroke of his paw when I passed him, as I must have done, and at a closer distance than I like to think of. I forgot to say that he had either sprung at the smoke, or been in the act of springing when I fired; more probably the latter, from the direction the ball took, as the marks of his claws and blood—in fact, where I killed him—were close to where I was when I fired the first shot.

We went back to the waggons to doctor Rebel, and left the boys to get the lion out of the spruyt, and to take his skin off. When I came to sit down, after fixing up Rebel's wound, I found myself perfectly unstrung, and was seized with a strong desire to cry, and to run about shouting. It took a "second's mate's nip" of peach brandy to steady me, and two or three pipes.

I have shot several lions since, though not at such close quarters, and been in worse danger on

land and by water, but have never experienced the reaction the same way. I suppose it was from going through such an ordeal for the first time, and realizing the fact that I had slain the king of beasts nearly single-handed.

During the next month I was hunting northward, with very little result, and at times I felt greatly disposed to give up my trip; but just as I was at the lowest ebb of despair, a good koodoo or an eland would fall to my gun, and my followers would rejoice. I had with me now as good a horse as ever it was my fortune to bestride—a spirited, long-maned and tailed grey, who liked nothing better than to hear my chirrup, when away he would go, *ventre à terre*, as the French say, after the first herd of antelope we encountered. I no more dreamed of sparing that grey than of sparing myself; and it was with—

But stop, I am going too fast.

I had been out one afternoon, and was returning empty-handed to the little tent and fire by my waggon, when on approaching, instead of finding the tent there as a landmark beside the curling smoke, no tent was to be seen—nothing but the waggon, and no one near.

When I rode up, I had to shout for some time before my boys came up, and meantime I had been examining the torn and trampled tent and the scattered fire.

I asked the scared-looking, trembling wretches what it all meant, and expected to hear that a herd of large animals had charged down upon them, wishing all the time that I had been there. But no. They told me that all the mischief had been done by a vicious rhinoceros, from whom they had hardly escaped with their lives; and when I seemed hardly disposed to believe, they showed me his spoor, the great three-toed hoofs being plainly indented in the soft earth, while here and there the ground was ploughed up by his horn.

"I must have you, my fine fellow," I said.

And the next morning, after shifting our quarters, I mounted, took up the spoor of the rhinoceros, and tried to track him down.

I might as well have tried to fly; and at last, sick of the self-imposed task, I alighted, secured the horse's bridle to a broken branch of a good-sized tree, and went off on foot to try and stalk some antelope. This took me a good two hours, and when I got well within reach they threw up their horns, and bounded off, to my great disgust.

"The fortune of hunting," I said to myself.

And, taking a short cut back towards the tree, I at last got pretty near; when I saw that the grey was kicking and plunging in a frightful manner, and snorting with dread.

"Soho, old boy, soho!" I cried.

But the horse did not hear me; while I hurried my steps, feeling sure he was being tormented with flies, and being in dread lest he should break the reins and gallop off.

Guess my astonishment—there and then, as I got within some sixty or seventy yards, I saw the horse rear right up, tugging at the reins, and fighting hard with its fore feet as it snorted and whinnied most loudly. My astonishment, though, was not at the

horse, but at what I saw to his left, as I quickly cocked my rifle and brought it to my shoulder; for, as the poor grey reared up, a great, vicious-looking rhinoceros was charging at him horn down, as if to rip, and uttering a strange, squeaking noise.

There was one sharp crack as I fired, and heard the bullet tell just behind the animal's shoulder; but I was too late, for in an instant the beast had caught the poor grey in the flank, ripping him horribly, and throwing him over on his side, as, in continuance of its charge, the rhinoceros went on in its blind fury for twenty yards, then fell on its knees, rolled over, and died—shot through the heart.

I was hardly thinking of the beast, though, then; for I had hurried up to my poor horse's side, loading as I went, to find it lying shivering in a pool of blood, and so horribly injured by the savage beast's horn that it was a merciful act to put my rifle to its head and fire, when, with a faint sigh, the poor brute raised its head once and then let it fall, for it was dead.

Dead as the rhinoceros, which did not stir when I went close up and sent another bullet through its head, receiving a fine trophy in its horn; but that day's work spoiled my sport, and I soon afterwards made my way to Natal.

A Dark Mamma.

THE following colloquy comes from an unknown source:

"Ephrahem, come to your mudder, boy. Whar you been?"

"Playin' wid de white folks' chilum."

"You is, hey? See hyar, chile, you'll broke yer old mudder's heart an' brung her gray hairs to de grave wid yer recklumness an' carryin's on wid evil assocayshons. Habn't I raised you up in de way you should ought to go?"

"Yethum."

"Habn't I bin kine an' tender wid you an' treated you like my own chile, which you is?"

"Yethum."

"Habn't I reezoned wid you, an' prayed wid you?"

"Yethum."

"An' isn't I yer nater'l detector and guardeen fo' de law?"

"Yethum."

"Well, den, do you s'pose I'se a-gwine to hab yer morals ruptured by de white trash? No, sah! Get in de house dis instep; an' if I eber cotch you 'municatin' wid de white trash any mo', niggah, I'll broke yer black head wid a brick."

AT the presentation of a pistol to a Connecticut corporal, the orator apostrophized as follows:—

"Corporal—My heart is full. These times try the souls of us all, as well as our pockets. My words must be few, and to the purpose. Take this weapon and go in. Say you will. Resolve that it is a big thing, and that you can see it. Shoot at it. Smite them, hip and thigh, and pay no regard to camphine or brickbats. But beware of old Bourbon. Do your duty, John. Keep out of draughts. Don't go off at half-cock, and keep your pistol pointed from you."

Under the Yellow Flag.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XVII.

"WE must have passed her," I said at last, for it seemed impossible that she could be so far off; and just then my surmise proved to be correct, for the light from the east increasing, we could distinguish the prahu lying some distance to the right, in which direction we now pulled.

Then the moon rose over the water, showing us plainly the exact course to take, and making it evident that we should have a hard fight to reach the vessel before some of the swimmers, who were hot in chase.

"Bend to it, gentlemen—it's no use to try to hide now," cried Timkin. "Take an oar, Mr. Leslie, and pull for your life. Can you shove another over the stern, captain, and manage to steer us?"

"I'll try," said Captain Black, faintly.

And as he did so, and I bent to the oar I had thrown over, we forced the boat rapidly through the water, in spite of the tide.

Timkin's words were true enough: it was of no use to try to hide, as was now proved by several shots falling around us, though without harming any one.

"Another good pull, gentlemen; then in oars, and beat off any one who tries to board you."

As he spoke our boat struck the side of the prahu, when the huge fellow leaped on her deck with the rope, like a cat, sending the boat out into the stream with the recoil, and causing two Malays, who had been left on board, to shrink from the side in dread of his gigantic form. The next moment we saw him standing up, tugging at the cable; then there was the rapid whirr of a running rope, a splash in the water, and the light vessel began to slowly yield to the force of the current, and to float towards the mouth of the bay.

Its progress was, however, so slow, that swimmer after swimmer came up, with kris in teeth, their savage eyes rolling in the bright moonlight; but they were at a fearful disadvantage; and, in spite of the fierce way in which they clung to the oars, they were beaten off, one man who had got a hold upon the gunwale, and was ready to strike at me with his kris, being plunged under by a blow from Graham's oar.

Three of our beaten-off assailants now turned and swam for the shore, while six more kept now at a distance swimming towards the prahu, one trying to climb up by her rudder, but he was dashed off by Timkin before he could reach the deck, upon which they all turned to battle with the current, and make their way to the shores of the bay, sending after us a volley of execrations and yells. A fire of shots was also kept up against us from the beach, the hull of the prahu being struck more than once.

As we got nearer the mouth of the little harbour, the tide, which ran fiercely round, seemed to bear the vessel more swiftly along; but we were swept so near the land that for a while we were in great peril of being cast ashore; in fact, we in the boat heard the prahu strike twice. Before there was

time, though, for our enemies to run round and take advantage of our position, Timkin had contrived to hoist the large matting sail a little way, and the wind catching it, we floated away clear of the little rock, and were soon beyond the reach of present danger, when we began to climb slowly on board, to the number of eight, including Timkin.

Bitter as I was, I could not loose from my neck the little arms which clung there, nor yet feel unsoftened by the sobs which came tearing from Eve's breast; and there was not a heart that could have remained untouched on seeing there, in the bright moonlight, the meeting between Captain Black and his brave-hearted little wife. The big sailor sat down on the deck, and cried like a child, leaping up, however, the next moment, to strike himself fiercely on the chest, and take another tug at the sail, Graham being at the rudder.

"Here, gentlemen all, take a pull here," growled Timkin, "or we shall have the pirates aboard again directly."

We answered to his call, more of the sail was hoisted, and then we began to send the water foaming off right and left, as the swift vessel rushed over the silvered waves.

"Safe for the present, then, thank God!" I muttered.

"If we do not encounter the other prahu," said Graham, quietly.

And then I turned, and looked him in the face, and was met by a calm, unflinching look, that seemed nought but frankness, as the moon shone full upon him; but I could not, even then, fight down what was in my breast, and I turned away.

"You ain't so werry bad, are you, sir?" said Timkin then to Captain Black.

I saw a gleam of his old crochety whim come across the captain's face, as he lay there on the deck, half supported by his wife, and then he replied—

"Bad? No, Timkin. Never felt better in my life."

And once more I turned away; for I saw him raise his eyes to his wife's face with a smile of ineffable sweetness—such a smile as I should not have thought it possible that his weather-beaten face could have borne.

Then the poor wife, with quivering lips from which no sound came, looked from one to the other as if imploring help, till her eyes rested on Eve's, when my wife glided to her side, kneeling down upon the deck, and taking the hand of the dying man; for we all knew the change that had come over him. The drawn, pinched look and the wild eye told a tale that it was impossible to try to controvert; and a dull feeling of misery fell upon us all as we thought of the fate of the brave, lion-hearted man who had been our stay through so many troubles. "What were we to do when he was gone?" was the question more than one man asked himself, while sob after sob burst from the weeping women.

It was a solemn sight—the wreck of the stout man lying there, unable to move hand or foot, for he was almost cut to pieces; and, from the strange delirium into which from time to time he wandered, I fancied that one of the weapons with which he had been wounded must have been poisoned. The moon,

nearly at the full, lit up every rope on board the prahu, while the sea rippled pleasantly and musically against her sides—a music to which he seemed to listen, smiling the while, and struggling again and again to draw a long breath of the free, pure breeze that wafted us along.

"If you'd stick to the helm, sir," said Timkin to Graham, in a voice that did not seem to be his, "and keep the wind well on her beam, I'd thank you; for if it is to be that the pore skipper is to slip his cable, I shouldn't like not to be there to take his last order. He says he was never better, and you know what that means, pore chap."

He went below for a few minutes, and then came on deck again with a little earthen vessel, which he filled from a water jar; and then, kneeling down beside the dying man, he wetted his parched lips and bathed his face, afterwards taking the handkerchief Eve gave him to lay cool and pleasant against the cut and bruised forehead.

After a while, the captain seemed to revive a little, and whispered to his wife, who raised his head a little more, so that it rested upon her shoulder, when he signed to us to come nearer.

"You, Timkin, take the helm," he whispered; "but shake hands first. I don't want to say anything to you, only that you always were a good-for-nothing lubber; but you know your duty."

The great sailor could not repress his sobs as he went aft and relieved Graham, who came forward and took his place by the captain's side.

Then there was a pause of quite half an hour in that still night, and, as the dying man's eyes seemed to glaze, more than once I thought he had spoken his last word. But after a while he began to mutter—"Ought to have foreseen—persecution—savage revenge—great responsibility." Then he started into wakefulness, and looked from face to face in a wondering manner, till his eyes gazed upwards into those of his wife, when there came a pleasant, happy look upon his countenance.

"Kiss me, Jenny," he said, gently, "and God bless you! for you've been a good wife to me. And you, English gentlemen, I need not ask you to do your duty by the women. Mr. Leslie, sir, you're in the wrong: she thinks so—I think so—a dying man's words, sir. You must trust to poor old Timkin. He has not much book learning, but every inch a sailor. You men, treat him as the officer I have made. Timkin!" he said, in a louder voice.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the sailor, in husky tones.

"Don't take them into port, Timkin. I shouldn't try to make Batavia."

"Ay, ay, sir," sobbed the great sailor.

And I saw him in the moonlight go down on his knees, and let his face fall upon the hands which held the tiller.

"He knows me," said the captain, smiling, "and he'll do his duty—rough diamond. Mr. Graham—sir—my wife—I leave her in your hands—a man of honour, and a gentleman," he said, with a smile, looking fully in my face the while; and in these fleeting instants I could see how full a confidence had existed between him and the faithful partner from whom he was so soon to be separated. "Duty first, gentlemen—self last—nor-east by east—gains every

moment—twice as many pumps could not keep it under—scuttled sure enough—good name though as honourable man—rising fast—very fast now. Let's go down together, Jenny—one more kiss—sweet now as when we were a young bright couple, darling, years ago—all well—never happier in my life—Is that the water, Jenny?—over us—darkness."

There was a faint struggle, a motion of the hands as of a swimmer trying to strike out, then an effort to clasp his weeping wife's neck, and the waters of death had closed over Captain Black's head.

The silence that ensued was even painful, for not a sob was heard, grief seeming to have frozen the tears that had bathed the dead man's head. No one moved; but we stood there gazing at the solemn picture before us; and as my eyes fell upon the bent form of my wife, it was with the well-known words seeming to ring in my ears—

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Like his—like his! But could it be? Could my feelings ever so change that I could lay my head in peace upon that shoulder, and as hopefully and calmly await my end? Even in that solemn time, my heart said "No;" and the wail of the wind, sounding through the light rigging of the prahu, fell upon my ear like a groan of despair.

"Mr. Leslie, sir, perhaps you'll take a spell at the wheel," said a gruff voice.

And, walking aft, I received a few instructions, and relieved the sailor from his duty, when Timkin went below, came up again, and stood thinking apparently for a few minutes, but only to go down again; after which he returned on deck, thoughtful and calm, his rough, boisterous emotion all passed away, and his face hardly showing a trace of his sorrow. With the help of the men, he now carefully and gently laid the captain's body in the centre of the deck, covering it with one of the smaller matting sails, which he cut free for the purpose. Then he once more went below for a few minutes, and on returning, came up to me, followed closely by Graham and Mr. Stayman.

"There aint no Union Jack to lay over him, poor chap," said Timkin, sadly. "There's no colours here; and if there was they'd only be piratical sort. Has either of you gentlemen got a handkerchief as looks like colours?"

There was no smile on any face there; but each felt a sentiment of respect for the rough sailor's traditional form, as he took the bright silk handkerchief held out by Mr. Stayman, shook it, smoothed it out, and then reverently spread it over his commander's face, and came back to us on tiptoe.

"Shall we bury him at sunrise or sunset?" said Mr. Stayman, then, sadly.

"Neither, sir," said Timkin, slowly; and then, rousing himself, he seized the line, and hauling the cutter up alongside, made her fast there. "Neither, sir. And now, please, we must work again for our lives. You heard the captain's words, sir—solemn words, as I heard too, far off as I was—didn't he talk about going down, gentlemen?"

The sailor held up one hand as he spoke, and then, as if aiding his rough oratory, he pointed with it downwards.

"We need not trouble to bury him, gentlemen; that's took out of our hands. He'll go down, just as he spoke—spoke like a prophet—for this here wessel won't float another hour."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE sailor's words fell upon our ears like a knell, but they were the words of truth. As the lightly-built vessel scraped over the rocks near the mouth of the bay, when we so nearly went ashore, a rugged point had made an entrance; and Timkin, when he had gone below, had found the water rising slowly, but surely, so that for the second time we could feel the planks as it were gliding from beneath our feet.

"Now, gentlemen, work please, and lend a hand here," cried Timkin, bluffly. "You, Muster Stayman, sir, lower down them two water jars into the cutter. Mr. Graham, sir, and Mr. Leslie, help the ladies over the side; now, my lads, be smart; slip in and lay the oars square, and see how she stands for mast and sail, while I see if there is anything below likely to be useful."

But the fast rising water prevented Timkin from getting anything from below, and there were no provisions on deck except some large fruits in a basket, but those he lowered down.

The men in the boat reported that the sail was there, but much cut about, and there was no mast; neither could any substitute be readily obtained from the vessel. The news that the prahu was in a sinking state, far now from causing a panic, was received quite with apathy. There was no hurried struggle as to who should be first over the side; but places were taken slowly, and the men busied themselves in arranging the stores thrown hastily in by the Malays when they brought them down from our tents.

The greatest difficulty was to bring away poor Mrs. Black, who had knelt down by the side of her dead husband, and no one seemed to wish to break in upon her sad communion.

Meanwhile, though everything likely to be of service was crowded into the little vessel, the rope was cut off, and one of the sailors held on with a boat-hook, nothing remaining to be done but to get Mrs. Black into her place, and to push off before the prahu went down; and so low was she in the water that this might almost be momentarily expected. Timkin had spoken twice to the weeping woman, and Graham, too, had vainly endeavoured to persuade her to come away; but she seemed deaf to all entreaty, sobbing wildly, till a thought appeared to strike Graham, who leaned over the side, and whispered a proposition to me.

I acceded coldly, and Eve was handed by Graham up the side, though she had shrunk back at first, and glanced uneasily at me upon seeing who was to assist her. But I turned away my head for a few moments, and, on looking back, Eve was on deck, bending over Mrs. Black, who yielded to her touch, after stooping once to kiss the lips of the dead, and then suffered herself to be led to the side.

Five minutes after we had pushed off, the sailors hoisted a scrap of sail upon one of the oars, until something better could be obtained; but little as it

was, even this was sufficient to make us glide gently away from the prahu, whose matting sail had been lowered, and which now lay low down, and almost motionless in the water.

"Take oars all who can," whispered Graham, after a word with Timkin, as he pointed to the figure of poor Mrs. Black crouched in a heap in the bottom of the boat.

And feeling that it was for the purpose of increasing our distance from the prahu when she went down, four oars were thrust from the side, when, from this additional impetus, the water began to foam beneath the little vessel's bows as we sped on.

Meanwhile Timkin was busily at work, lashing together a boat-hook and oar, which, when shipped, made no bad substitute for a mast, and, after staying it, he contrived to hoist the proper sail; so that our oars were laid in, and we glided swiftly and with no unpleasing motion over the waves. During the hoisting of the sail and the necessary shifting to lay to the oars and make room for Timkin's operations, our attention was taken for a few minutes from the prahu, and at the end of that time I encountered a meaning glance directed at me by Graham, when, looking seaward, I found that our own little craft was the only vessel that broke the monotony of the wide plain of waters.

"Amen!" muttered a gruff voice at my ear; and on turning round, I saw the big sailor leaning towards where the prahu had gone down. "I shouldn't try to make Batavy," he says. P'raps not, p'raps yes; howsever, we'll try."

There was sadness and sorrow enough on board the small boat—heaviness enough, Timkin said, to sink her; but she rose and fell lightly over the waves, though somewhat leaky—enough so to keep one man's attention fixed upon the duty of baling from time to time. For she had been knocked about to some extent during the hurricane, so that her seams were in two places a little started, though the leakage was much lessened by some torn linen being thrust in with the blade of a knife.

The island was fast disappearing, seeming to sink, as it were, lower and lower, till the last faint cloudy appearance had passed away; and, unless we should sail in sight of the other or some cruising prahu, we had little to dread but the elements—at least, we thought so then.

Timkin seemed to have a very misty idea of the direction in which Batavia might lie, for, upon being asked, his reply was not such as would have inspired a shipowner with the confidence that would have induced him to bestow a command.

"Batavy, you see, sir, lies up to the norrard somewhere; and I shall do as the pigeons used when I was a boy, and p'raps as they do to this here day, go right off straight ahead, till I come to some place I know, and then take a line again from there."

WINCHELL tells a story of a stranger seeing an Irishman leaning against a post, watching a funeral procession coming out of a brick house at his side, when the following dialogue ensued:—"Is that a funeral?" "Yes, sir, I'm thinking that it is." "Anybody of distinction?" "I reckon it is, sir." "Who is it that died?" "The gntleman in the coffin, sir."

The Potato Beetle.

FROM an American point of view, the potato beetle is a native of the West. He originated in the cañons of Colorado, and may be called an off-shoot of that section. The State is overrun and loaded down with them. They formerly lived on wild plants; but one of them went up to Denver on a little pleasure trip, and at the hotel there he had some fried potatoes, and they struck him as being about the best thing to quiet hunger he had ever lighted on. He went home and advised his brethren to go East, and they simply packed up a few collars and a change of clothing, and started.

The potato beetle dawns on the farmer very rapidly; he sees his potatoes nicely up, their green tops reminding him that potatoes in the fall at a dollar a bushel are better than a serpent's tooth or a thankless child, and he goes to bed dreaming of wealth pouring in on him in furrows, and the next morning he visits his field, and sees some red spots on the potato-vines, about as big as pin-heads. He notices that they give rather a genteel look to the leaf. In a day or two he sees these red drops begin to grow, and then to crawl; and in three or four days he goes out, and is so surprised at what he sees that you could not paint his look of astonishment—not even prime it over one coat with less than a bucket of paint. He sees that the potato beetle has arrived, and has brought his whole family, and all his wife's five hundred friends. He is there, with all his tools and implements of labour. He sees a beetle about as large as the letter "O" when it drops from the lips of a small boy as he incautiously sits down on an adult bullthistle. He sees this beetle laid off in stripes endwise, like the marks of a grid-iron on a slice of broiled liver. He sees that what the beetle lacks in size he gains in quantity. He is there, and keeps coming. He has as much mouth in proportion to his strength as the Amazon River or an opera singer. He can beat a horsefly laying eggs, and I have seen them do the job at the rate of twelve miles an hour. Ten days from the time an egg is laid it has been hatched, married, and is the mother of 1,132 grandchildren.

An Oriental Incident.

THE Russo-Turkish war revives an old story: A Turkish and a Russian officer once fell into a dispute as to the superiority in discipline of their respective soldiers.

"I can prove to you on the spot," said the Russian, "how perfectly our men are trained."

And he called his orderly:

"Ivan!"

"Sir?"

"Go to Mehemet's, buy me a pound of tobacco, and come back at once."

The soldier saluted, turned on his heel, and went out.

"Now," said the Russian officer, taking out his watch, "my orderly is walking straight to the next corner, where he must turn; now he is turning; now he is opposite the white mosque; now he is crossing the maidan; now he is at Mehemet's;

now he is buying the tobacco; now he is coming back; now he is on the block below us; now he is at the door; now——"

And the Russian called out—

"Ivan!"

"Sir?"

"Where's the tobacco?"

"Here, sir."

The Turkish officer, showing no sign of surprise at the precision of this Russo-tobacco movement, promptly broke out:

"Ho, ho! my soldier can do that every day in the week."

And he called—

"Mughtar!"

"Sir?"

"Go to Ali Effendi's and see that you bring me a pound of tobacco. My pipe is empty."

"Instantly, sir."

Following the tactics of the Russian officer, the Turk pulled out his watch and went on:

"Now Mughtar is in the street; now he is passing the palpooch bazaar; now it is noon and he is saying his prayers; now he is drinking at the stone fountain; now Ali Effendi hails him and asks about my health; now Mughtar is paying for the tobacco; now he is coming back by another way; now he is on our street; now he is at the door; now—— Mughtar!" shouted the officer.

"Sir?"

"Where is my tobacco?"

"I haven't found my shoes yet!"

Back to School.

"BOTHER education!" said a boy to himself. "That's what ails me," he went on, as he pushed his toes into the wet sand. "I don't believe in a fellow grinding and learning all there is to learn, and not let other folks have a chance. There's lots of other folks in this world besides me, an' I aint going to be a hog, and try to learn all there is to learn."

After a minute he went on—

"Don't I know 'nuff now? Three times two are six, four times five are twenty, and four and four are eight. That's as correct as I could get them if I went to school for a hundred years. And don't I know how to spell? C-a-t is 'cat' the world over, and I'll bet on it every time. H-e-n spells 'hen,' and I know it as well as if I weighed a ton."

He rose up to throw a stone at a dog across the street, and after resuming his seat he went on—

"Jogerfy kind wrestles me down, but I don't go much on jogerfy. What do I care whether an island is entirely surrounded by water, or whether there aint any water within ten miles of it? S'pose I'm going to buy and sell islands for a living? I don't care which is the highest mountain or the longest river, do I? I'm going to keep a feed store, and when I'm rolling bales o' hay around will I care about mountains and rivers? I've heard the boys go on about exports and imports, and straits, and seas, and capes, but what's them to me? If a fellow wants a bag o' oats, is he going to wait and ask me when the island of Madagascar was discovered?"

He carefully examined the big toe of his left foot and the heel of his right foot, and gloomily observed—

"The old folks are making ready to push me into school, and I've got to make ready to keep out. I can't take to school, somehow. I could sit here and study all day, but the minute I git into school I'm nervous. Something's going to happen to me this week. I'll be taken home in a wheelbarrow with a big gash in this heel, or this toe almost cut off. That will mean four weeks on a crutch, and they don't allow lame boys to go to school and crutch up and down the aisles. Or, s'posin' I go home with a palpitation in the heart? The old lady has had it, and I won't more than get into the house before she'll have me tucked up on the lounge, the camphor bottle down, currant jelly and sponge-cake in the distance, and she'll call out to the gov'nor—

"Father, it's no use of thinking of sending this boy to school. He looks stout and healthy, but he's a mere shadder. The close atmosphere of the school-room will kill him before snow flies."

The boy rose up. There was a grin all over his face, and he chuckled—

"Palpitation is the key-note. A sore toe can be seen; a palpitating heart is hidden away under hide, and fat, and ribs. Now, then, I'm off."

That Barrel of Salt.

ONE of the firm who keep a commission house on Woodbridge-street is a man of muscle. He can lift a barrel of flour as easily as a common man lifts a bag of oats, and it scarcely makes his ears grow red as he heaves a barrel of salt into a farmer's waggon.

For weeks past he has been boasting of his strength of muscle, and wanted to see something he couldn't lift, and the boys around the store got their heads together the other day. They took a salt barrel, and filled it with broken pig-iron, old weights, and other things, put two inches of salt at either head, and rolled it to the kerbstone; and at a favourable hour a dray backed up in a most innocent manner, and an order from a grocer for a barrel of salt was handed out.

The drayman and two of the boys fooled round the barrel of salt so long that the strong man got out of his chair in disgust, threw off his coat, and said—

"You fellows had better get porous-plasters for your backs. Get out of the way, and give me a chance!"

He seized the barrel by the ends, and lifted away. It didn't move. He spit on his hands, and laid out to pull the hoops right off. The hoops stayed right there. So did the barrel.

"It takes four good men to lift one o' them barrels," said the drayman.

"Nonsense! I've lifted a score of them, and I'll pick this up or break my back. I guess the salt must be wet."

He got in position, drew a long breath, and then lifted till his eyes looked like two towels left out on the clothes-line in a dark night. The barrel didn't lift. Pig-iron was too much for muscle, and the lifter sat down on the walk. His back used to be

plumb up and down, but it hasn't been since that lift. His eyes are getting back to their original positions, and the red is leaving the back of his neck, and he sees two men handle a bag of dried apples or a bushel of beans without a word of comment.

The Egotist's Note-book.

IN connection with the Blantyre explosion, "A meeting of the citizens of Glasgow was held yesterday to organize a relief committee. The Lord Provost presided. It was announced that between £500 and £600 had been subscribed, including £500 from the Marquis of Bute and £50 from the Baroness Burdett-Coutts." If this be not a misprint, how wonderfully generous the "Glasgie bodies" must have been.

I see in a printers' paper the advertisement of a firm to supply "Hot Rolling Machines." How we do advance! Only a few years ago and hot rolls were all made by hand, and were very frequently late in the morning; now they are made in hot roll—stop. I see the machines are meant for paper.

At a late meeting on temperance matters, "The Rev. E. Wilberforce proposed the next resolution, approving of the establishment of homes for the reform of drunken women and girls. He assured the meeting that the habit of secret drinking was largely on the increase amongst women of the middle and upper classes. He knew of one young lady who had reached a consumption of seventeen glasses of port wine daily. Drunken women were far more difficult of reclamation than men. Drunken women would, in fact, drink stimulants in any shape. He had heard of one woman who, in the absence of other stimulants, drank a mixture of shoe blacking and turpentine. (Hear, hear.)" Why "Hear, hear" when the lady was guilty of drinking something very nasty? If any one doubts it let him try a bottle of Day and Martin—shilling size—mixed with half a pint of turpentine. I can assure him that he will find even quarter those quantities something as near poison as he can take to live, and an hour afterwards he will cry anything but "Hear, hear!"

What can be more brutally stupid than the behaviour of the animal (biped) who robbed the old man at Brighton of seven or eight hundred sovereigns? To secure them, he went about entrusting sums to various publicans to take care of for him—and he was found out.

The conviction of Messrs. Swindlehurst and Langley must make some City gentlemen shake in their shoes, for this new style of investigation deals largely with the process known as oiling the palm.

A great discovery has been made according to the *Zemur and Bassiret*, a Turkish newspaper. Mr. Gladstone is of Bulgarian descent. His father was a pig dealer in the vilayet of Kustendje. Young Gladstone ran away at the age of sixteen to Servia, and was then,

with another pig dealer, sent to London to sell pigs. He stole the proceeds, changed his name from Trozadin to Gladstone, and became a British subject. Fortune favoured him till he became Prime Minister. Gladstone has no virtues. Gold is his god. The Ottoman Government offered him five thousand pounds to put their finances in order, but subsequently withdrew the offer, and his vexation at this, combined with his bad Bulgarian nature, caused his opposition to the Turks. The surname Gladstone means lust for gold, and was given to him on account of his failings in that respect. And there are people in Constantinople who believe all this. Bless those Turks!

The Printers' and Stationers' Trade Journal makes the following happy remarks:—"A year or two ago an old white-headed man might be seen any morning about the neighbourhood of the colonial markets in the City, selling a little toy in the form of a pill-box, minus the lid, fastened on to the end of a short string ending in a little wooden handle, which, when rapidly swung round, made a loud and peculiar booming or buzzing sound. The old man was a well-known City character, and his frequent cry of "only a ha'penny," interjected by the noise from the toy he attempted to sell, was familiar to almost every frequenter of the City. The noise was caused by the rubbing or grating of the loose loop on a resinous substance attached to the end of the handle. The vibrations produced on the string were transmitted to and thrown out by the pill-box, and the old man, although no one knew it, carried in his hand and sold to the public, for the insignificant sum of a half-penny, the first telephone."

Here is a good story from the same source. A couple of stationers living opposite to each other in a well-known sea-side resort on the south coast, recently got to loggerheads. One of them, in order to draw his neighbour's customers, piled his window with shilling packets of note paper, marked at elevenpence. People stared, walked in and purchased. The next morning, when the other man's shutters were taken down, the window was discovered to be filled with shilling packets of note paper marked 8d. Day by day this little game went on, one underselling the other, until prices gradually dropped to 6d., 5d., 4d., 3d., and 2d. By this time the town saw and enjoyed the joke; and, notwithstanding the efforts made to keep the sales down, by taking at least ten minutes to seal or tie up every purchase, the two stationers were heavy sufferers, and every man, woman, and child in the town was stocked with enough note paper to last them half a lifetime. However, the fight went on, each man devoutly wishing he had stuck to his legitimate trade, and had not tried to undersell his neighbour. The morning following the "2d." day found the opposite window with the shilling packets marked 1d. This was too much. Within ten minutes an enormous placard obscured the window of the other man, bearing in huge letters the words, "Go to the fool opposite." But the "fool opposite" had had enough. In a few minutes the 1d. ticket disappeared, and in its place appeared the old price, one shilling. In a twinkling down came the poster bearing the obnoxious words, and an exactly similar

placard appeared, announcing that "The price of a shilling packet of note paper is one shilling." And thus the war of extermination ended.

One don't want to ridicule charity; but read this list of contributions to one of the sick and wounded lists:—"Lady Emily Dundas, sheets and sponges; Mr. T. Sachs, twenty bottles smelling salts; Mrs. Harbour, twenty gross opium pills; Mr. Little, ten cases disinfecting fluid; Mrs. Ochterlony, quinine, chloroform, and bandages; Australian Meat Company, 5 lbs. Liebig's Extract; Messrs. Strickland and Rowe, waterproof sheetings; linen from Mrs. Edmund Gurney, Mrs. Metcalf, Hon. Mrs. Byng, Miss Michaels, Rev. J. Simpson, Anonymous; Lady Selina Bidwell, warm socks." All useful, no doubt; but can any one read it without thinking of Tom Hood's poem on washing the black man white, where amongst the contributions were Mrs. Channell, a piece of flannel; Lady Hope, a bar of soap; the Misses Grub, a tub!

Judge, to prisoner who had just escaped conviction by the skin of his teeth—

"You may go, sir. But though justice absolves you, morality condemns you."

Prisoner—

"Thank you, my lord. I always had a better opinion of justice than of morality."

"DID I not give you a flogging the other day?" said a schoolmaster to a trembling boy. "Yes, sir," answered the boy. "Well, what do the Scriptures say upon the subject?" "I don't know, sir," said the boy, "except it is in that passage which says, 'It's more blessed to give than to receive.'"

WEASELS.—An anecdotist says:—"I well knew a man who, many years since, while passing over the common at Tydd St. Giles, in Cambridgeshire, was beset by a number of weasels, which came out of a stump of high thistles. They appeared to wish to reach his face, and he, having no other weapon, knocked them down with his hat. He told me that he killed fifteen or sixteen of them before they would leave him. I think your friends need have no doubt of the truth of the above. How many years it is since it occurred, I cannot say, probably seventy or eighty."

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER XXI.—STEPHEN VAUGHAN EMULATES AN OLD FRIEND.

THE Waveley party having been early upon the ground, the Squire had managed to insinuate the chaise into a place just past the winning-post, where they waited the commencement of the races, and watched the proceedings of the motley crowd.

"Twenty to one against 'Ighflyer!'" shouted a man perched upon a barrel. "Thirty to two against Sally Brass. Hany gent take the odds? Book it to you, sir—you in the cap?" cried the fellow, making a set at Tom Phipps, very much to that gentleman's disgust, for he was busy explaining the theory of racing to Alice Vaughan, and enlightening her uncultivated mind upon the mysteries of making a book.

"Pray don't bet, Mr. Phipps," whispered Alice.

"Oh, certainly not, if you forbid me," said Tom, gallantly.

"I say, Frank, only listen," said Stephen; "here's Tom Phipps—Meerschaaum, or Mere sham—Tom turning into a ladies' man, and doing the polite. Here, come away—it's quite sickening. Let's have a stroll."

But Frank seemed to be so very much in the same boat with Tom, that he was not disposed to come away and obey the slightly dog-in-the-mangerish hest of friend Stephen. There appeared to be a very strong desire upon Frank's part to stay where he was, and to talk to the ladies who occupied the back seat of the old four-wheeler. And, besides, he was engaged; and engaged people, generally speaking, are the worst of company, and sometimes a positive nuisance. As long as you let them "talk shop," which in their case means of the excellences of the adored, all is right; but on other subjects they are "flat, stale, and unprofitable" to the world at large. There were so many things to explain to Miss Glebeley: why the horses were dressed up in clothes; whether they were well fed, they looked so thin; and which way they would run. Then the hieroglyphics upon the cards were hard to understand, and the colours of the horses had to be referred to so many times that, at last, before all had been thoroughly explained, the bell rang for the first race, when the course had to be cleared. Excitement became visible on every countenance, and the ladies had to be supported as they stood up in the chaise. Then followed a pause; and, when every one was growing impatient, came a light cantering by of horsemen in rainbow-tinted silks, and a cry from the ladies that the race had commenced, closely followed by a blush for their mistake and undue excitement.

But at last came the start for the first race; and amidst a burst of cheering, away darted seven horses along the course, watched by thousands of eager, straining eyes, as they seemed to melt in the distance into one parti-coloured moving body, opening and closing, and spreading out in various combinations, but by degrees to grow more straggling as the distance became greater, till lower down the course they disappeared for a few seconds, but only to be

again announced by the loud shout of the more distant spectators. Nearer and nearer—more excitement—more shouting—three horses together—one falling behind; and then, with a rush through the air, and the rapid beating of the hoofs upon the turf, a blue and yellow meteor, closely followed by a blue flash, darted by the winning-post, when by reference to their cards our party learned that Belladonna had won the race, while Blue Belle ran second.

"Bravo!" cried the bluff old Squire. "That's capital. Makes one feel quite thirsty." While the cheeks of the younger ladies looked flushed with excitement, their brightened eyes being well in keeping with the heightened tint of the other features.

All at once the Squire referred to his watch, and found that it was half-past one. Then he turned his eyes towards the hamper, and then took another glance round at the crowd, but evidently rather fidgety, and with something upon his mind.

As for others of the party, it was not surprising that Madeline's cheek should wear a soft flush, for she had been standing with her hand tightly clasped by Frank, to keep her from falling, which was highly necessary, for there was not the slightest probability of the chaise stirring, the horse having been removed, and being comfortably engaged at the time grinding his corn in a neighbouring stable.

Upon meeting the eyes of Alice, laughing with a mischievous glee, and perhaps a little sharper from a mingling of disappointment, Madeline blushed still deeper, to the very great delight of the little maiden. Like a gallant knight, though, Frank came to the rescue, and, using the same weapons as the assailant, whispered to her, but loud enough for Madeline to hear—

"Alice, did you know that Tom Phipps was a printer?"

"No," said the young lady, very innocently. "I thought that he was—why he *is* in an office in the City."

"Oh, yes," said Frank, "quite right; but he's a printer all the same. Look at his proofs."

Saying which, Frank pointed to the marks of Tom's dirty fingers upon the maiden's straw-coloured gloves.

The blush that was fast fading from the cheeks of Madeline Glebeley reappeared in those of Alice, but of a deeper, richer tint; while the sheepish aspect of Tom Phipps was so ludicrous that it was upon him that the laughter centred—laughter of so loud and merry a nature as to draw forth a "Hush, hush, children!" from the maternal Vaughan.

"Half-past one," said the Squire, not noticing the laughter. "Hum! half-past one, and the first race only just over. What's the good of saying twelve o'clock punctually, and then being an hour and a half late? Well, I sha'n't wait any longer. Here, Frank, and you, Tom, lend a hand, and help undo this basket. We'll soon see what's inside. Where's Steve?"

But no one knew, for Steve had not been seen since the race.

"Poor boy," said Mrs. Vaughan, helping to make the hamper disgorge its contents—"poor boy, I hope

he will soon come back, or he will be so hungry and faint."

"Pretty little fellow!" said the Squire, breaking off and eating a piece of bread, "that would be a pity. Ah, he ought to be here. I would not give much for his chance—that's a capital glass of ale," he said, interrupting his speech to taste the foaming liquid—"let's see, what was I saying? Oh, I know. I wouldn't give much for his chance of a meal after Tom Phipps has been at the *vee-arngs*. I believe that is the correct pronunciation, is it not, Miss Glebeley?"

"Oh, papa, dear!" exclaimed Alice, "how can you be so rude?" And then, in a whisper to Mrs. Vaughan, "What will Mr. Phipps think?"

Mamma's reply was a smile at her child's earnestness, while the only effect that it had upon Tom was to produce that peculiar twitching of the eyelid which in a person of a lower grade of life would have been called a wink, but in a person of Mr. Phipps's position merely a muscular contraction.

"Sam Weller the second emptying the hamper," said Frank, as Tom set busily to work helping Mrs. Vaughan. "Now, old fellow, let's have the comments."

"None here," said Tom, sharply. "Cold chicken, custard, tartlet, tongue, pigeon pie, pork pie, porter, pepper, puffs, pastry; but no comments. Mrs. Vaughan, ma'am," said Tom, in a tragic tone, "where are the comments?"

"I think we can make a very good lunch without either comments or commentators, Mr. Phipps," said Mater.

"Just so," said Tom. "I quite agree with you, ma'am, for common—"

"There, glass of sherry with you, Tom Phipps," said the Squire. "You'll get nothing to eat if you talk so. Now, ladies, no ceremony. See that Miss Glebeley has a good lunch, or dinner, or whatever it is, or she will complain when she gets home, and I shall have her father taking me to task, and setting me to read tracts by way of penance."

"Next race reg'lar sell," said a voice behind the party. "Young Byng's mare Vesta scratched. Most ruin him, I know."

"Why, what's up?" said another.

"Oh, she's just thrown Dick Curber, who was to ride her, and they do say his neck's broke. Howsoever, he's took back home on a gate, and there aint no one else as dare ride her. As for Byng himself, he daren't even mount her. But she's a bad devil—an ugly, camel-necked beast. She'll whip round that old head of hers, and bite your legs as soon as look at yer. I have ridden the mare, and I knows if I was on her back who'd be first over the last hurdle, and that's me, my lads. But then once in a feller's life's enough to have a mare roll upon you."

"Well, but," said another voice, "can't he get any one to ride her?"

"No-o-o!" said the other. "I don't believe there's a man in the country as would mount the brimstone. Hurdle race, too."

During this colloquy the Squire had been sitting almost petrified, and with his knife and fork in anything but an elegant position. At last, though, he

gave a start, poured himself out a glass of ale, drank it, and burst out—

"Poor fellow, poor fellow—quite spoils one's liking for the race. Poor fellow! Been betting heavily, too. How could he be such a donkey? And t'other poor chap's neck broke. Why, I've a good mind to ride that mare myself," he continued, seriously.

And then, seeing the efforts made by all present to keep from laughing, he looked down at his eighteen stone figure, recollected himself, and then laughed the loudest of all.

"If it's a fair question, sir," said Frank, "what do you weigh?"

"There, don't ask me," said the old gentleman. "I'm ashamed to tell you. But I declare, if I were a young fellow like you, or Tom Phipps, I'd ride."

"But I've never been on a horse more than half a dozen times in my life, and I suppose they wouldn't consider it the thing if I got down and climbed over the hurdles. And about neck-breaking, you know. I've only got one."

And then Tom settled his own in his collar, as if to make sure it was all right.

"And I'm no horseman," said Frank. "You know I seldom hunt."

But at the first words a tender hand was upon his arm, and Madeline gave such a look of horror and alarm that he gave her a reassuring smile, which quite set her at rest as to his intentions.

"Ah," said the Squire, "when I was a young man—"

But what took place when he was a young man no one learned, for he was prevented from enlarging upon the degeneracy of the present age by Mrs. Vaughan, who exclaimed—"Poor Stephen, he will be quite famished," being the only person who seemed at all disposed to trouble about the odd one of the party.

"Never mind him," exclaimed the Squire. "He has turned in with somebody, where there'll be a scrap to eat, I dare say."

"There! hark!" cried Alice, excitedly. "There goes the bell again."

"So there is," said the Squire. "So help pack."

And in a few minutes the hamper contained the fragments of the feast, while the party had again taken their places to see the next race, which was to have been a more exciting affair, for at short intervals lofty hurdles had been placed across the course, and the men were even now securing the last row. But a damp had been cast upon the proceedings by the rumour that Vesta would not run; for, in spite of her brimstone character, she was the favourite of the race. However, the hopes of the secondary horses ran high, and now Handgallop stood in the first place; for between the last-named and Vesta the wise in such matters had decided would be the sharp struggle in the last run—this being considered the great event of the day.

The course was cleared, and the six horses about to start were taking the preliminary canter, and giving time for a few concluding bets to be made, while dissent was strong as to the running or not of the favourite, Vesta. But all doubt was soon at an end; for a tremendous cheer arose from the direction of the saddling paddock, and directly after a

beautiful, wild-looking, greymare came sidling slowly up the course, with starting eye, arched neck, and her great pink nostrils widely extended. Every now and then she stood quite still, tossing and shaking her head, half in fear, half in anger, as the cheers became louder and more incessant, the spectators forgetting that every shout and wave of hat or handkerchief was likely to put a stop to the proceeding they so devoutly wished for. But the cheering was again taken up, and "Vesta, Vesta," ran from lip to lip, to the very great disgust of those who had horses in the race. At the same time, knowing the character of the wilful beauty, every eye was directed at the jockey in white who dared to take the place of the injured man.

The colours were quite correct, "white with black cap and gold tassel," and the shouting grew louder than ever as the rider took off the said black cap and saluted the crowd, thereby displaying more plainly the fair Saxon countenance of Stephen Vaughan. But restive mares are not fond of having caps waved upon their backs, and Vesta formed no exception to the rule, for she set up her back, and began to what is technically termed "buck," a most unpleasant caper for a man who does not set himself up for a finished horseman, and decidedly not agreeable if he is.

"Hooray!" shouted Tom Phipps, wild with excitement, leaping from the chaise wheel to the ground, to the very great disgust of a stout butcher with corns.

"Hooray!" shouted the Squire, waving his hat, and feeling prouder than he had ever before felt in his life; while the name of the rider sped from mouth to mouth, so that the ladies of the party heard from other sources that they had previously been unable to comprehend.

The crowd cheered, and Frank Henderson with them; for he could not help feeling proud of his schoolfellow, though the moment after his pleasure became damped, for it seemed to him that it was done out of bravado, and for the sake of lowering him in the eyes of Madeline.

"Oh, my dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Vaughan, turning pale, "do pray stop him. Foolish, headstrong boy—he will be killed. Get down, pray, John, and stop him."

"Not a bit of it," said the Squire, stoutly—"not to save him from breaking his neck. But he won't do that. I taught him to ride, and he can sit any horse in the kingdom. Look there," he exclaimed, as Vesta made a buck leap, but without altering her rider's position in the least. "But he can't win, he's too heavy, ever so much. See how he sits her, though, just like a cork. But he's acted like a trump, so let him alone."

But Mrs. Vaughan did not feel as if she could let her first-born alone, for, turning with a pitiful face to Madeline, she whispered—

"Oh, pray, beckon to him to come, Miss Glebeley. He would come for *you* directly. So pray do, for my sake."

It was only a low whisper, but perfectly audible to Alice and Frank, whose eyes met, when those of Alice twinkled half-spitefully, for Frank looked as if he had been stabbed to the heart. As for Madeline,

as she stammered a reply to Mrs. Vaughan, her face turned scarlet, for as she glanced at Frank she saw his pained look, and then how it changed to one of bitterness, as his brow knit, and he looked straight before him at the course.

But there was no time for stopping the rider of Vesta; and, after her *mal-à-propos* speech, Mrs. Vaughan saw that she was too late, and, tightly clasping her hands, stood gazing at the incidents now following each other in rapid succession.

Madeline turned to Frank, but he would not see her look, while the poor girl herself was blinded with the tears that would rise to her eyes; and, in spite of feeling how ungenerous were the thoughts, Alice could not keep down the triumph which swelled her breast, and made her snub Tom Phipps terribly when he spoke, greatly to that gentleman's discomfort.

"Confound them!" growled the Squire, all at once; "I wish they'd be quiet, and stop that stupid shouting"—the old gentleman had ceased his own—"look at that, now!"

But there was no need for the Squire's expression—every one was gazing with the greatest excitement at the beautiful group before them: the mare, frightened and fretful with the noise surging around her, and angry at being mounted by a strange rider, had been fidgeting about, champing her bit, and sending flakes of foam all over her vein-woven sides. One of her first acts had been to throw out her head and legs, and indulge in a shake, almost violent enough to dislodge saddle and rider; and just as the exclamation left the Squire's lips, the mare reared up as though she would fall backwards, but, coming down once more upon all-fours, she gave another buck leap from the ground, as though formed of steel springs.

However, Stephen Vaughan did some credit to his father's training, and retained his seat with all the grace and ease of a finished horseman; and at last, making out his own party, waved his hand as he cantered by, in answer to the fluttering of handkerchiefs and Tom Phipps's puce cap.

But Madeline did not wave her handkerchief; and for her and Frank the day seemed to have turned quite cloudy. And no wonder—for Frank felt like a man possessed of a great treasure, and, hardly believing in his good fortune, jealously watched it, and the more keenly from knowing that there was one who would rob him, were it possible.

"Looks easy enough to ride," said Tom, replacing his cap, with all due attention to his curls.

"Oh, yes; easy enough," said the Squire, drily. "We must give you a mount before you go."

"Thankye," said Tom.

But he did not appear to be excessively delighted with the prospect of the promised treat.

And now the horses were ranging as near in line as was possible with the restless animals. As for Handgallop, a moment's glance sufficed to show that the strong bay horse must prove a formidable adversary, and, heavily as Vesta was weighted, would most probably be the winner. Every stride showed forth the iron sinews he possessed, as in a pace the *fac simile* of his name he darted off before the signal

was given, and was only pulled up just before reaching the first hurdle.

This caused a little more delay, much having been already caused by the alteration of weights, &c.; but the rider, a little, weazen-faced-looking fellow, soon got back into position, and gave Stephen Vaughan and his steed anything but an agreeable look.

The excitement now grew intense; for there had been four false starts, all of which tended to make Vesta more troublesome and fretful than ever; and it was very evident, even to non-professional observers, that much of the disorder had been intentionally caused by the scarlet-shirted rider of Handgallop; while the jockey might have been seen, by a close observer, gnawing his under-lip in a way that did not betoken much inward comfort.

But the starter was again trying to solve the difficult problem of getting the horses into a line; and at last, in despair, when the restive brutes were here, there, and everywhere, he threw down his flag, shouting the magic word—

"Go!"

"Now they're off!" was the cry.

And away bounded six horses out of the seven; but one—the favourite, Vesta—performed a sort of caracole, and came round very placidly, facing the other way, as though waiting to see the horses come in again. And there she stood, stock still, amidst the laughing, cheering, and jeering of the crowd—a British crowd, always pitiless towards a man in trouble.

It was a trying position for Stephen Vaughan; and his friends pitied him from the bottom of their hearts.

"Hooray! Vesta wins!" shouted a voice from the crowd.

And then there was a peal of mocking laughter.

"Hundred to one on the fav'rite!" shrieked another jeering voice.

And again there was a roar of laughter.

"Oh, hang it!" groaned the Squire, shuffling about upon the chaise seat, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "Oh, hang it! what's to be done?"

But there was no time for an answer. Before trainer, or groom, or owner could approach the wilful beauty, Stephen, with the blood trickling down his chin from his bitten lip, had, in the anger of the moment, raised his whip to strike; but in an instant he changed his tactics, and began to caress the proud arching neck of the mare, who answered by obeying the light touch of the rein, and, turning sharp round, bounded off with a stride that would soon have distanced all competitors. At this time, though, all that Stephen Vaughan thought of was that it had taken him out of hearing of those who had been jeering at his discomfiture.

This incident had taken up but a very few seconds of time; but they had been moments of inestimable value, and such as had been borne in agony by the owner of the capricious Vesta; for he had well known and trusted the powers of his steed with so much confidence, that upon her success depended the future of a foolish, but open-hearted man. Bitterly did he feel the ignominious position

in which the friend who had come forward to help him was placed; and as he saw Stephen Vaughan raise his hand to strike, he felt that all was over, for he knew how the mare would resent a blow; and then he turned to leave the course, drawing his hat down over his eyes as he did so.

But trifles change the current of the human thoughts: in an instant his despair was changed into anger, and he felt an intense desire to wring the necks of a couple of under-sized, horsey young gentlemen, in very tight, wrinkly trousers, big boots, long-sleeve waistcoats, and slouchy caps, who sniggered to one another about the new rider's mishap.

"Ho! ho! ho!" laughed one. "S'elp me! only looky there—there's a rider!"

But the anger of Vesta's owner was in another instant turned into hope once more by the shout of the crowd, as the mare bounded off, and he thought that there was still a chance for the second place, which would save him from irretrievable ruin.

Stephen Vaughan knew all this well enough; and bitterly, too, did he feel the jeering and laughter of the lookers-on; but once in motion, he began to look at the aspects of the race. The six horses before him were all well over the first hurdle before he even made a start; but now that it was made, and he was off, with hands well down, and a grip of the saddle that showed he meant business, the mare went over the short turf with that light, springy stride only shown by a true English thoroughbred.

Stephen's heart rose with every bound; but he smiled bitterly as he heard the cheering of the fickle crowd. He could not, however, hear the cries that arose as he neared the first hurdle.

"He's too much for her; she'll rush it—she'll rush it!"

But, no; with the grace and ease of a bird, the noble mare seemed to skim over the ground, lightly rising to clear the obstacle, and then away again, stretching out more and more, and with every stride lessening the distance between herself and those which had gone before.

On went the mare, like the wind, needing no urging, but trying her best to overtake her competitors; but the start they had obtained was tremendous, and the *acmé* of Stephen's hopes now was to gain a second place; though he could feel that had he but had a fair start, it would have gone hard with him, in spite of his weight, if he had not come in the winner.

The second hurdle was well cleared by all six horses, and it was now very evident that scarlet, feeling sure of the race, was keeping Handgallop back, and playing with his rivals. But like a fate, steadily on came Vesta, with her long, springy stride; and she, too, cleared the second hurdle as gracefully as the first.

The third hurdle—and Vesta still far enough behind; but here, down went a horse and man, and Stephen trembled lest his wilful steed should check at the unwonted sight, and refuse the leap; but, no—with a slight pressure of the knees, on went the mare, seeming almost to stride over the bent-down hurdle, close by where the last horse had fallen. And now, thoroughly warming to her work, away she went; and, flushed with excitement, the veins

began to swell in her rider's forehead, while he felt the arteries in his temples beat as the wind rushed by him.

The fourth hurdle—and over like a flash, and the mare was alongside of the last horse of the five; then a head—half a length—a length ahead—and then away, over the next hurdle—abreast of the next horse, scarlet leading the way by a good two lengths, with black-and-green next; while now turning in his saddle, Handgallop's jockey seemed to consider that it was time to increase the distance, and began to settle to his work, though, to the most inexperienced eye, there could not be a doubt as to the issue of the race.

Stephen Vaughan knew what he had to do; and that was—his best, and come in as close to the winner as he possibly could. The temptation to whip or spur was terrible; but he felt that he must not use either, though on both sides and in front of him they were in full requisition; but the virgin skin of Vesta remained untouched, and she answered to the pressure of the rider's knee with elastic bounds, that brought her before long into the third place, and now, to Stephen's intense delight, he felt that before long he would be abreast of black-and-green.

Onward still, but with scarlet many lengths ahead, and evidently now doing his best, while to the satisfaction of Vesta's rider he could feel that the second place must be his. A glance over his shoulder showed him that he had nothing to fear behind, and on he went, handling his mare with all the skill he could command.

Only two more hurdles; and, as they neared the first, Vesta crept up closer and closer still to the Irish Maid and her black-and-green rider. Over again, with a skim like a bird, scarlet far on in front, and Stephen running neck and neck with the black-and-green; but as they neared the last hurdle, Handgallop slackened speed, refused it, and nearly threw his rider, giving time for the two next horses to come up, when the black-and-green rushed right in front of Stephen's mare, rose to the leap, and fell heavily; but, with a tremendous rush through the air, Vesta cleared horse, man, and the broken-down hurdle, at the same moment as scarlet forced Handgallop to take his leap; and then edging off from his rival for fear of some trick of jockeydom, knowing as he did the character of his steed, Stephen set his teeth, and pressed on, knowing now how good was his chance for the prize.

There was no thought of being second now, but the rider of the mare trembled with excitement as he saw the jockey hotly bringing whip and spur into play. And now, as they swept along the last part of the course, came the ringing cheers of the crowd, loudly heard above the rapid beat of the horses' hoofs.

Onward still, every second seeming a long minute. The last two hundred yards, and scarlet raining the blows upon his horse, which gained half a neck twice over, but only to lose it again the next instant. Loud shouts and cheers as the horses passed, and, as they darted along, Stephen heard the shout of—"Whip, Grey! whip, Grey!" but he dared not, though he lost the race, for he felt certain the mare would resent it. So, with whip in teeth, and both

hands at the reins, he pressed her sides, and away she dashed.

Rushing wind—half blinded eyes—a sea of waving handkerchiefs—thundering cheers from the excited spectators.

"Good race! good race! Grey wins—bay wins—grey wins! Vesta—Vesta—Vesta—grey wins!" yelled the crowd.

And grey had won, without touch of whip or prick of spur; for she shot past the winning-post a good neck ahead of Handgallop, and went careering on far, far enough, before she could be stayed.

"There!" exclaimed the Squire. "Think of that, now—a race is never won till it's lost. I'd have bet a thousand to one against him."

The great race of the day was over, and the people rushed into the course as the horses were led back with dripping and heaving flanks. Then into the scales went the winner, to be declared all right, with plenty to spare, and afterwards to be nearly hand-shaken to death, and half-drowned with proffered glasses of champagne.

The great race of the day was over, too, for the Waveley people. Those which followed might be good or bad—thousands might be lost or won; but the Waveley party were quite satisfied. So, after shaking hands all round, and handing out sherry and bottled ale to the last glass, filling up the intervals by dabbing himself dry, the Squire settled himself into his seat, and proceeded to fan himself cool.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, with a sigh of relief, "I wish I had a pipe—I can't get on with cigars. Lend me that dirty little black thing of yours, Tom Phipps."

Tom produced the said "dirty little black thing," which was petted up most tremendously, and enclosed in a handsome morocco case, lined with pink satin, the occupant being, moreover, mounted with silver.

"Nice colour, aint it?" said Tom, flourishing the black-hued meerschaum, and giving it an affectionate rub upon the sleeve of his coat.

"Bee-u-ti-ful!" said Frank, drily.

"I've had that pipe two years," said Tom, as he passed it to the Squire, who received it with a serio-comic aspect of disgust—"and I don't know when I've seen one colour better."

"Pray," said Alice, "are pipes the very reverse of everything else, that they are to be loved for their nastiness?"

"Hush!" said Frank; "don't talk so, or you'll put Tom's pipe out truly as well as metaphorically. How many pipes have you at home, Tom?"

"Fifty-two," said the little fellow, rather complacently.

"Fifty-two pipes!" said Frank. "Fifty-two weak points."

"Weak, eh? what do you mean by that?" said Tom. "Oh, I say, though, here he is! See-e the conqu'ring he-e-e-e-e-ro comes, tiddle iddle iddle umpty, tiddle iddle um the drums," sang Tom, most unmusically.

And in effect, Stephen Vaughan made his appearance to be praised, blamed, cheered, and scolded, at one and the same time; while somehow or another Frank could not help feeling a peculiar

sinking sensation of the heart as he watched and listened to all that was said; for Madeline's countenance was deeply suffused, and it was evident that it would have been a great deal more comfortable for all parties if the Reverend Augustus Newman had not set his face against racing, but allowed his sister to be of the party.

About an hour after, the Squire had the horse put to; and leaving the gentlemen to obtain a conveyance for themselves, and to come away when seemed them good, he drove off the course.

A Fight with the Waves.

IT was an awful night. A storm was blowing from the south-west with a violence not often experienced even on the Cornish coast, where gales from that quarter are so frequent. The sea and the wind seemed to vie with each other in noise, breaking against the steep rocks with a rush and a roar that roused people from their dreams, and made them rise to look out of window at the dark, driving clouds hurrying across the sky—now showing the stars twinkling calmly far above, then hiding them from the sight of the watchers, whose thoughts would be of the vessels tossing about on the heaving water, liable at any moment to be engulfed or to be dashed to pieces on some cruel rock.

Many a mother thought that night of her brave sailor boy, who might never return to her, as she lay sleepless, listening to the shaking windows and rattling tiles, while the wind seemed ever and anon to recede into the distance, before returning with a far-away rumble at first, gradually growing louder, until the gust again broke against the houses with more fury than before.

Not far from the shore, more than one ship trembled and shook as the waves broke against her sides, and masts were snapped off as easily as a dead twig on a tree. Guns of distress came booming on the wind, but there was no lifeboat there, even if men had been found courageous enough to venture out in such a sea. There was a little crowd assembled on the narrow strip of sand called by the village people the beach, looking out to sea, and listening to the frequent distress signals, but unable to do anything.

One small trading vessel, which had been anchored some distance out, had broken from her moorings, and now, deprived of her masts, tossed hither and thither, a mere wreck. She had sprung a leak, and was filling slowly but surely. The boats had been lowered, but were swamped immediately. The few men remaining on the vessel continued to work at the pumps, but in a mechanical, hopeless way, for a while; and then, as wave after wave broke over her, and it was evident they could do no good, they gave up. A larger wave than usual swept two of them away, and two more only saved themselves by clinging to the bulwarks. As the water receded, these two looked at each other, with pale, rigid faces, and then each, actuated by the same impulse, grasped hands. One of them was a mere lad of nineteen or so, tall, well built and active.

"Good-bye, Jack," said the elder man—a dry, weather-beaten old sailor. "It's all over with us,

I'm afraid. Another wave like that 'ere— Here it comes."

In another minute they were washed from where they clung, the old man disappearing almost directly, to rise no more; the younger, seizing a spar which floated near him, and throwing one arm over, endeavouring with all his might to swim away from the ship, lest he should be sucked down when it sank. But his efforts were vain: in such a sea it was impossible to make way in any direction; so he gave up, and, clasping the spar with both arms, waited to see what would become of him.

"I wonder," he thought, "how long I can hold on, if I don't go down with the ship?"

The wind howled and whistled over him, while amidst that and the roaring of the water he seemed to hear every now and then the wild shriek of some drowning man, though he could not tell whether it was fancy or awful reality. The water was over him completely at intervals, blinding him, deafening him, almost stunning him for the time; but he did not entirely lose consciousness, and managed to retain his hold. Fortunately, he was tossed farther from the sinking vessel; and when at last she began to disappear, he was quite out of reach of the vessel.

What a long, long time it seemed to him that the storm and darkness lasted, and he was dashed hither and thither by the pitiless water, holding on desperately to the piece of wood, his only chance for life. But at last he became aware that the darkness was giving place to twilight, at the same time that his cramped arms began to refuse their office, and he felt that he could cling no longer, that it would be better to give up and sink at once than to go on with the struggle. He felt the spar slipping from him, made a futile attempt to grasp it again, and recollected no more, till he opened his eyes to the broad daylight, without an idea of where he was or what had happened. He was lying on a small strip of shingle, the waves breaking only a few yards from him; on the other side a steep cliff, towering above him almost perpendicularly for seventy or eighty feet. By degrees his memory returned, and, sitting up, he looked round. The storm had in a great measure abated, though the sea was still very rough, with white lines of foam showing themselves as far out as the eye could reach. Jack Harrison staggered to his feet, and then, feeling weak and giddy, sat down on a large boulder, and tried to take in his situation. Close to him was a cave in the side of the cliff, and something in its aspect seemed familiar to him. The long wall of rock was concave just where he was; so that, although the shingle was exposed in this one place, both to his right and left the waves dashed themselves against the cliffs. In a few minutes he saw it all. This place was well known to him, for he had often rowed round it when a boy, it being not far from the village where he was born; and he remembered at the same time that it was all covered, that even the top of the cave was covered at high water. It was evident that the ebbing tide had left him there, and that now it was flowing again, and would soon be upon him. He had escaped with life only, to undergo all the agony of fighting with the waves afresh in the

broad daylight. There, some two or three yards above his head, was the mark left by the water. He looked up in the hope of seeing some place where he could climb to, and be out of reach of the approaching waves; but the cliff showed smooth and almost unbroken, without any foothold anywhere. He looked into the cave, but it was evident that the high tide filled it completely.

The water came nearer each minute, creeping up slowly and surely, till at length it touched his feet, when the young sailor sank on his knees in despair, feeling that there was no hope—not the faintest—of being saved. Far out on the heaving bosom of the ocean, the white sails of a schooner were to be seen, but too far off to see if he signalled; and nearer several dark objects rose and fell, the remains of some vessel which had been dashed to pieces against the rocks. The clouds were breaking, and the sun, showing himself, turned the white-crested waves into glittering silver, too bright to look upon, while the deep blue of the sky, showing in places, was mirrored there. Jack looked up, but he did not see the brightness of the earth in contrast to the horrors of the night. What he saw was a bare little room, with lattice window, through which a sun-beam stole, to fall on the head of an old, old woman, with snow-white hair, whose wrinkled hands were clasped before her worn old face, the tears trickling between her fingers. The vision fled. He clung to the block of stone, and looked round in horror as a larger wave rolled up and broke upon him, drenching him. He started up wildly.

"God help me," he cried hoarsely, "for my poor mother's sake!"

And then, climbing on to the slippery boulder, on which he had hard work to retain his foothold, so as to be for the present out of the reach of the water, he took one more survey of the cliff side. Only one place seemed to offer the faintest chance—a slight projection of rock, high up, and at a little distance, which the rising tide now cut off from him. It was just above high water mark; but even could he attain it, he could get no farther, for above the cliff rose smoothly, without any irregularities that could be taken advantage of by a climber. Supposing he gained it, he thought, could he manage to retain so precarious a position through the long hours before the tide would be out again? He knew that during low tide it would be possible by wading to get round the angle of the cliffs to the right, and that once done he would be safe.

But for the present it was enough to consider how he should reach that point which had before seemed so impracticable. The water touched his feet again, elevated as he was from his first position; but he planted his feet firmly, seeing then that his best chance was in remaining where he was for the present. He must stop there as long as the water would allow him to keep his balance, and then swim for the point. He would not be far below it then, and might be able to scramble up. Once he thought of trying to swim round the angle of the rocks, when he would not be so far from the shore; but this idea was quickly abandoned, for he was cramped and stiff yet from his long immersion in the night, and to attempt to swim any distance in

such a state would be like committing suicide. No; that little projecting point was his only hope of life, and on it he fixed his eyes anxiously, noting how the water surely crept a little nearer to it. Very slowly, though; it seemed to him to take twice as long in gaining an inch as it had done before he resolved on this step, and his impatience grew more and more excessive [as the difficulty of keeping his feet became greater. But he set his teeth, and placed his hand firmly against the side of the cliff as he saw a wave rolling towards him. The last one had washed over his feet, but this one—could he keep his position? Nearer it came, and in less time than it takes to tell it, he was struggling in the water. At any moment he might be dashed against the cliff sides. He placed himself on his back, and determined to float as long as he could, tossed here and there at the mercy of the waves, with the momentary expectation of being dashed to pieces. He opened his eyes after a few minutes, and looked up. There, a few feet above his head, was the point of rock, tantalizing him by its nearness, and yet out of his reach. He had given himself up for lost, when the next wave, swelling up under him, lifted him up, and he managed to clutch, first a bunch of seaweed that hung from the rock, and then the point itself. One last effort, the exertion of all his remaining strength, and he was perched above the reach of the water, bruised, panting, and exhausted. He was sprinkled and half-blinded occasionally by the spray, but he was safe for the present, though he might only have lengthened his existence by an hour or two. Now that the excitement of immediate danger was over, he became aware that he was frightfully thirsty, and that he had not tasted food since the evening before. It was now about noon, as he could tell by the position of the sun, which fell upon him with scorching power, and made him giddy, so that he had hard work to keep from falling back into the water.

However, now that he had escaped with life so far, he was determined to make a hard fight for it, and, with this resolve, he drew himself more securely on to the ledge of rock, and waited. He was parched with thirst, and blinded by the glare of the sun, which had now dispelled the clouds, and shone steadily down, being reflected from the sea, and from the smooth side of the cliff—it was towards the end of August—and the heat was so great that it made Jack Harrison feel that it would be a relief to slip off into the cool water, and end his misery.

Hour after hour dragged on, and still he maintained his position, his suffering from thirst growing more and more intense.

At last, what he had been looking forward to, and hoping for all this time, came to pass. A boat with two fishermen in it made its appearance round the angle of the cliff, and his heart leapt with joy. He tried to call to them, but his mouth was so dry that he could not get out anything but a feeble hoarse "Hallo," which it was impossible they could hear. But at any rate, he thought, they could not fail to see him in his conspicuous position, perched there on the side of the rock, the water having fallen now several feet. They must see though they could not

hear him, and he waved his arm to try and attract their attention, but in vain. They were so near that he could distinguish their faces, and recognize one of them as an old fisherman he had known as a boy; and yet they did not turn his way. Slowly, and without looking in his direction, they rowed farther out, until they disappeared behind the cliff on his other side. The disappointment was so intense that he covered his face with his hands, and cried like a child.

When at length he roused himself and looked round, the sun was lower in the sky, and the heat was fast growing less. The water, too, had fallen so low that the shingle would soon be exposed again, and he began to wonder how he should get down, for he was some ten or twelve feet above where the sea had first thrown him. He was so cramped, he could hardly move, and his tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth, while he felt confused, and now and then lost the consciousness of where he was. As he watched the water, waiting for it to recede a little farther, he saw something white gleaming from a wave a little way out, and wondered vaguely what it was. The waves played with it, and tossed it about on their surface, bringing it nearer, and then taking it back again; but for some time it did not strike him what it could be. However, the waves at last brought it almost under him, and then he turned cold with horror, and would have cried out if he had been able; for he saw that it was the body of one of his mates, a sailor from the wrecked ship. A fear seized him that the water would leave it there, beneath him, and that he should have to drop almost on to it. But the fear was needless. It was carried away again, and he saw it no more.

When the sun was getting low, the strip of sand was all to be seen again, and he began to think about getting down. He was beginning to lower himself, so as to hang by his hands, when his cramped limbs refused to obey him, and he fell heavily to the ground, where he lay stunned and bleeding.

Meanwhile, the news of the wrecks of that night had carried grief into more than one humble home in the little fishing village. In one a widow wept, heartbroken, amid her unconscious children; in another, a maiden bewailed the loss of the handsome young sailor who was to have returned to make her his wife; and in another a mother mourned her son. It was the home that had shown itself so vividly to Jack Harrison as he knelt by the block of stone, with its latticed window, and poorly furnished room, and the mother had the same white hair and care-lined brow. They had told her that morning that the ship which contained her all on earth—her brave boy—had been wrecked, and that every one on board had perished. That same sea had taken away her husband long years ago, then her eldest son, and now her youngest and last was gone, and had left her alone in the world.

The pitying neighbours had been to try and comfort her; but she had begged to be left alone, and they had reluctantly left her.

The dying rays of the setting sun fell on her as she sat with her head bowed over the table. The door was a little open, but a form that darkened it

did not rouse her, and it was a heavy fall that made her start to her feet.

She came feebly and tremblingly forward, and kneeling down by the prostrate form, peered with her dim old eyes into the pale, hollow face that lay there unconscious of everything.

"It's my boy—my Jack—come home!" sobbed the poor old mother.

And taking his head to her breast, thanked Heaven for her son.

And it was he; for coming to himself, he had managed to drag himself round the angle of the cliff, and with his last remaining strength had crawled home unperceived.

But sailors can bear a good deal, especially when they are young, and the next day he was walking slowly down to the beach with his mother, to show her where he had been cast ashore. On the sand was collected a small crowd of fishermen and sailors round some object of interest, and, guessing what this object might be, he left his mother at a little distance, and went to see. There, in the midst of them, lay the old sailor whom he had last seen alive on the deck of the sinking ship, with a smile on his face—dead.

Under the Yellow Flag.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XIX.

AS we were not prepared to give better instructions we had to abide by the sailor's arrangements; and we sailed on and on, till the wind grew so fresh that the sail had to be lowered more and more, till a very small portion was sufficient to send the boat careening along through waves that kept sending their spray curling over into the bows; so that, from working occasionally, it now became necessary for one of us to keep on incessantly baling. The weather, too, from being hot, now changed to bitter cold, so that the long night through we sat shivering in the thwarts, such as were men from time to time taking to the oars, and rowing hard for the sake of circulating the blood in their numbed and chilled limbs. As for the women, we did all that was possible to give them such shelter as could be contrived by means of the canvas and matting we had in the boat; but for all that, they must have suffered pitifully, cramped as they were for room, and unable to lie down and obtain the rest they so much needed.

The weather grew worse as we neared the day, so that I began to feel grave doubts as to the possibility of our seeing another. I found, too, that my feelings were shared by Mr. Stayman and Graham; though upon Timkin being relieved from the tiller by one of the sailors, and coming forward, he would not commit himself to an opinion.

"I've been out in worse weather, times enough," he said; "and captains don't begin to holler every time they gets in a capful of wind. It's time enough to say it's awful, and fearful, and all that sort o' thing, when sails is blown out o' the bolt ropes, and you're jammed down on a lee shore, and everything's going to pieces under your feet, and you can't open your mouth without getting it full o' salt water. It's

blowing now, certainly, and it's werry dark, and I desay it'll blow more and grow darker before daylight, and another hand had better take to baling. Head to it, my lad, there, steady—steady it is. That's easier."

As the last words were spoken, a wave struck the boat, pouring in a deluge of water, and making her shake and quiver like a reed.

"All hands baling. Take anything," shouted Timkin. And then in a low voice to me, "I'll go back to the helm, or that lubber will have us swamped."

He carefully crept back, and changed places with the man, who came forward to bale, when the fresh hand at the rudder seemed to ease the plunging of the boat directly, even as a spirited horse grows less restive under the guiding of a familiar driver.

Before we had thrown out all the water, in spite of the steady hand at the helm, more came rushing in, twice over floating our provisions, soaking them with salt water, and sending despair into our hearts. But we baled on, dashing out our foe as fast as possible, while we scudded along through the dark night, over a hissing and boiling sea, whose whitened, foam-tipped waves seemed angrily leaping around, as if vying one with the other in their efforts to dash over us and swamp our frail boat.

It seemed impossible at times that a boat could live in such a sea. The wind increased in violence, till the spray cut from the top of the waves was driven against us in an incessant, cutting, pitiless rain; while the shrieking of the wind was deafening, and added to our confusion and feeling of helplessness. All now seemed to depend upon the little mast, which our steersman had contrived, though the slightest failing in steadiness of his hand would have caused us to be engulfed. The cold, saturated as we were with water, was piercing, added to which we were all suffering more or less from wounds received in the night struggle, and it required all the encouragement and hopeful words one whispered to the other to keep us from succumbing.

CHAPTER XX.

THE day at last, cold and leaden-hued, but with the wind dropping fast, and in a couple of hours it fell quite calm—so calm that the sea rapidly subsided to a smooth surface, but with a heavily rolling motion, the boat rising up one slope to glide down the next, easily and gracefully as some water bird. Soon, too, the sun broke out from the dense bank of clouds, sending warmth and hope once more into every breast, as we baled out the last drops of water, wrung our clothing, and ate and drank with avidity the food served out by Mr. Stayman, under Timkin's directions.

For the great sailor readily took to the leadership, and in a quiet but firm way issued his orders, seeing that the ladies were served first, and that everything possible was done for their comfort.

Ignorant as we were before of our position, our situation was now worse, for we had been scudding before the wind so long as the gale lasted, only too thankful that we were able to keep afloat in such a fearful sea. But now the wind had completely died away; and as the sun rose and gained power, it seemed to lick up every drop of moisture, enabling

us to examine the provisions, when, to our great sorrow, it was found that a great part of the biscuit was saturated with the sea-water and completely spoiled. One of the large Malay water jars, too, had been filled up by the waves that had leaped over into the boat, so that the water was quite useless; and the boat was lightened of a heavy weight when we cast it over the side, to watch it descend slowly down—down into the transparent depths, where all was at last blackness as of night; and as I watched the large dark vessel until it totally disappeared, I could not restrain a shudder at the thought of the narrow escape we had had from being engulfed ourselves.

The desire to live now seemed stronger within me hour by hour. I knew not why, for the feeling of anger, and hatred, and bitter misery burned hotly as ever in my breast. But this was no time to show it. We were together in that boat, thirteen souls, bound together by a strange fate, whose duty it was to fight one for the other till the release of life or death put an end to the struggle; so, blinding my resentment, I preserved a cold impassive manner, and telling myself that it was an act of duty, I laboured for Eve, as I did for heartbroken Mrs. Black and the other weeping women, who suffered hardly less than the captain's wife as they mourned for those from whom they had been torn.

But I could see that my calmness was not believed in by either Eve or Graham, whose eyes often met mine for an instant with a calm fearlessness, or effrontery, I knew not which, that at times almost destroyed the mask of quietude that I wore. But it was no time for selfish considerations; every thought and act had to be devoted to the general safety, and under our leader's directions one by one the articles thrown into the boat by the Malays were overhauled, the useful to be retained, while those which had mostly been seized from motives of cupidity, and merely cumbered the boat, were rejected and cast overboard.

"There!" exclaimed Timkin, at last, cheerily, "that's ship-shape, and leaves room for us to move about and navigate our craft as well. We're short enough of room without making a bum-boat of the little cutter. Why, if those things had been over the side, and these here others stowed away, we shouldn't have shipped half that water last night, and what we did ship might easily have been chucked out again. But, now, then, gentlemen, s'pose we overhaul the provisions again, see how long they'll last, and have 'em served out accordingly."

It was a task soon performed, and one which gave us all the heartache, seeming to crush out the little hope that came with the sunshine; for a little biscuit and a very small supply of water was all that we had for thirteen persons to exist upon for an unknown number of days.

The quantity to be served out was soon determined; and then, there being no wind, our leader set our boat's head once more to the north, oars were dropped into the water, and we began to row, though in a half-hearted, spiritless way, for we knew that in all probability we should never reach land.

Graham saw this, and, springing up in the boat, he spoke fiercely, telling us that for the women's sake it was our duty to toil on to the last; and that we might at any time, even if we encountered no ship,

fall in with some island where we might obtain fresh water, and perhaps an ample supply of fruit.

His words had their effect; and, spell and spell, we rowed on that day till, with the evening, a fresh breeze sprung up, when the sail was once more set, and we sped on; then, watch and watch, we lay down in the bottom of the boat to sleep, the females now having a better-contrived awning to keep off the cold night dews, which fell heavily.

The wind freshened more and more, and we dashed swiftly through the water; but there was no fierce storm that night, and we gladly slept the sleep of exhaustion, huddled together beneath the thwarts.

Morning broke again, bright and fair, but the breeze was gone, and we once more rowed on, hour after hour, taking thankfully the little portion of biscuit and water served out, and hoping that the wind would rise. But it was a perfect calm until evening, when again the fresh breeze filled our sail, and we parted the waters swiftly, the rapid motion seeming to act as a salutary change from the monotonous, weary toil of the day.

This weather continued for seven weary days; calm weather all through—the heat from sunrise to sunset, and at night a welcome breeze to bear us onward, whither we knew not, but with hope ever feebly lighting a spark in each breast that ere long either land or vessel would appear in sight.

After the seventh day, Mr. Stayman announced that we must partake of half-rations, whereupon the sailors murmured, saying that we had better eat what little there was than die by inches. But the resolute bearing of Timkin and the rest made them subside into a low murmuring.

Night came on once more, with the same fresh breeze so welcome ever; and after taking my turn to watch, I lay down beside Timkin and Mr. Stayman, Graham being at the tiller, and the three sailors forward. Weak and tired, I soon fell asleep, dreaming of happier times in boyhood, and forgetful of present misery, when I was awakened by a loud scream, and leaped up, but only to be smitten down directly, for there was a fierce struggle going on in the boat. Men were swaying to and fro in a desperate conflict, rocking the little vessel from side to side, the contending figures now falling over the thwarts, so that I was held down by the weight of another; but I got at last to my feet, in time to save one man from the blow of a knife aimed at his breast by the ruffian who had got him down; and then it was that Timkin, who till now had been unable to extricate himself, joined in the fray, and in a few seconds there was nothing to be heard but the laboured breathing of those who had struggled together.

The cause of the contest was soon explained by Graham, after he had thanked me for saving his life: while seated in the stern sheets, he had seen the three sailors quietly creep back to where the little stock of provisions lay, and in a few more seconds it would have been gone, had he not dashed forward, waking Mr. Stayman as he did so; and together they had beaten back for awhile the ravenous men, who had lost all good feeling in hunger-engendered selfishness.

There was no more sleep that night, but we sat there gloomy and full of terrible forebodings, for we had now a new enemy to contend with in the boat—a party in

whom we could put no trust. Henceforth we knew that life would not be safe in the days of the fearful famine that seemed marked out to be our portion. Certainly we were four against three, but we were always liable to be taken unawares, and the men we had to deal with were unfortunately such as were not likely to be moved by an appeal to their better feelings. What could we do? How could discipline be enforced at such a time, when we ourselves were so weakened by privation and hardships? No wonder despair brooded heavily over us as we sat waiting for the coming light, which was to reveal to us a dread peril that in those dark hours we did not wot of; and even when displayed before our eyes, it seemed to require an effort before we could believe that fate had used us so hardly at a time when our sufferings were already intense.

CHAPTER XXI.

I WAS sitting moodily, with my chin resting upon my hands, intently watching the forms of the three sailors, dimly seen in the morning light as they hung together close to the bows, when I was aroused by a groan from Mr. Stayman, who, in answer to my look of inquiry, pointed down into the bottom of the boat, where, overturned by the struggle, lay the large Malay water jar, perfectly empty, its contents having drained out to the last drop, and mingled with the leakage that had made its way in during the night.

Wash—wash—the water swept about under the gratings at every dip made by the little boat, and in my agony of spirit, as soon as I could comprehend the extent of our misfortune, I seized a baler, tore up the grating, and began to scoop up the gallon or so of the precious liquid, and to pour it into the jar.

Just then, Timkin, who had been watching our motions, lashed the tiller and came forward, took in the misfortune at a glance, stooped down and scooped up a little of the water in his hand, tasted it, and let the few remaining drips fall from his fingers, as he stood gazing blankly in Mr. Stayman's face.

Almost involuntarily, Mr. Stayman tasted it, and then shuddered; and lastly I did the same from the baler, to find it salt as brine.

"Curse them!" roared Timkin, in a rage; and seizing the earthen vessel, he furiously raised it in both hands, and, as the three men started up expecting an onslaught, he hurled the jar so that it flew between sail and stay, striking the foremost man full in the chest.

The sailor staggered under the force of the blow, and before he could save himself fell over the side with a heavy splash, disappeared, and rose again some distance off, sank again and once more rose, but this time to strike out vigorously and swim after the boat, which was sailing slowly forward under the last influence of the night breeze.

We all started up as if to save the man; but Timkin grimly ordered us to keep our places, and seizing the lesser boathook, he stood up, but instead of helping the man back into the boat, he gave him a fierce thrust under with the end, and continued to force him away as he struggled near the side.

The women shrieked, and Eve sprang forward, to throw herself at the great fellow's feet, praying him to save the man; and a wild outcry arose, mingling

with a curdling shriek from the swimming sailor; but Timkin fiercely called for silence, threatening with the boathook any man who stirred. One of the sailors, however, seized a rope, and made as though he would have leaped overboard to his companion's aid, and upon the poor wretch seeing it he shrieked wildly for help; for, though evidently a powerful swimmer, he was now growing unnerved, and beginning to strike out rapidly and in a hurried fashion that would soon exhaust him.

Then up sprang Graham, and the next instant he would have been overboard, had not the great sailor seized him with a grip that there was no resisting, while I scanned eagerly the horror-stricken faces of the ladies.

Timkin whispered to Graham as he held him tightly, when the young man's struggles ceased; while, speaking loudly now, our leader exclaimed—"Would you jump over to be amongst the sharks?"

At that dreaded word, a wild cry rose from the women, who covered their faces with their hands, that they might not witness the tragedy they felt to be impending; the men forward started up, cursing, and calling upon Timkin to save their mate, while, shrieking as I never before heard man shriek with horror, as he beat and splashed about frantically in the water to keep his foes at bay, the sailor begged and implored to be forgiven and taken on board.

"Forgiven!" cried Timkin, fiercely. "Yes, you deserve it—a man who would rob his fellows and a pack of helpless women of their last tiny share of biscuit, and upset the last drop of water in trying to get it! Why, the dog would have done murder if it hadn't ha' been for Muster Leslie here. Let him drown and the sharks eat him! save him from dying of thirst, like we shall. Might want to eat him, though, ourselves," he grimly added, in a voice that I only heard.

At the news of the fellow's misdeeds, the women wailed again; but they would have clung to Timkin all the same, had he not avoided them.

"What was the use of mentioning the water?" said Mr. Stayman; "they would have known it soon enough. But get him out, Timkin—get him out."

"I'm captain here now," growled the great fellow. "That lubber's a mutineer, and, for half a pin, I'd pitch the other two in after him." And he looked angrily forward as he spoke, so that the two men shrank together, and drew their knives. "Let him drown, as he deserves!"

As he spoke, the poor wretch's eyes seemed ready to start from his head, his beating of the water grew frantic, and the horror depicted in his countenance was fearful; but Timkin stood unmoved, and twice drew a cry of execration from the boat as he forced the drowning sailor away with the boat-hook.

CURRAN was one day engaged in a case in which he had for a colleague a remarkably tall and slender gentleman, who had originally intended to take orders. The judge observing that the case under discussion involved a question of ecclesiastical law, Curran interposed with, "I can refer your lordship to a high authority behind me, who was once intended for the Church, though in my opinion he was fitter for the steeple."

Out with Pat.

IN the summer of last year I undertook a rather novel kind of fishing expedition. My kit consisted of an india-rubber portable boat, together with the usual equipment of rods and tackle. The boat was made to hold two. The lakes I visited were those that lie in the wildest, most unapproachable, and unfrequented parts of Clare—the names of which, did I even remember, I could not spell.

With my man Pat, and my india-rubber boat, I fished several lakes which, in the remembrance of the inhabitants of those wild districts, had never supported a boat before; and consequently those were the waters on which I had the best sport.

What occurred on the lakes I mention I will now endeavour to describe.

Getting all my traps together at Ennis Station, myself the rods, tackle, &c., and Pat bearing the boat strapped on his shoulders like a knapsack, on procuring a car off we started. After ten minutes or so spent in threading the crowded streets, for it was market day, we at length got clear into the country; and in about three hours or so we came to where I intended making our first attempt. When the sound of the car, as it rattled away in the distance, came on the wind, I indeed felt that my excursion had begun in earnest.

After carrying the baggage some two miles or so from the road where we had been set down, over dreadfully rough land, we came quite unexpectedly upon a little lake in a hollow, which from its appearance I knew to be the one that had been described to me. In this—at least, so said my informant—there were pike as big as cows; and assuredly, as I afterwards ascertained, they were monsters indeed. Unpacking our boat, tackle, and provender, I sat down on the bank to fortify myself, by way of taking some luncheon, for the excursions to come, having previously directed Pat as to the blowing out of the boat. I was aroused in the middle of my sandwiches by hearing Pat exclaim—

"Bad luck to yer for taking such a tarnation lot of wind! But will yer honour come and help me to blow this thief out?"

On going to Pat's aid, I found it no marvel assistance was required, as he was industriously puffing in at one end, while the air went out at the hole intended for letting water escape at the other. By my help, however, and Pat's exertions, we at last got right, our boat launched, good luck drunk, and everything ready.

"Now, Pat," said I, when we were both inside, "shove off from the bank, and paddle me into the middle, while I get the rods, trimmers, and bait ready."

But the more Pat paddled, the faster went the boat round and round.

"Troth, yer honour," said Pat, warm with his exertions, "but it is a quare baste this, entirely; it first takes a hurricane of wind to blow it out, and then when it is floated it does nothing but go round like a tarnation big top. Faith, and it's no luck we will have in such a wicked consarn as this."

On my trying and succeeding no better, my hopes of sport indeed began to sink; but after some con-

sideration, I adopted an idea that had struck Pat, and that was to cut the paddle in two, and use the pieces as oars; and on trying the experiment, we found we got on, after a little practice, famously.

In half an hour's time I had a dozen trimmers set, and in a few minutes more the three trolling rods were out astern—a spoon bait on two, and a dried bait on the other, and all three fixed in the places I had caused to be made for them in the gunwale of the boat. We then rowed round and round in all directions without a run, till I indeed began to think with Pat, that the mighty big pike were mighty big lies, when bob went the top of my rod, and it was as instantly straight again, without any line running out; for I have my reels made stiffish, as when trolling off a boat in this manner, with the rods fixed, it frequently happens that, by the reel running too easy, the fish is missed from not being struck.

I was now on the tiptoe of anxiety; for the fish—if fish it was, and not, as I feared, a weed—could not even have been pricked, and would most probably come again. So he did! whiz—whiz—whiz, a few seconds after went one of the other rods. I concluded he had given up the spoon as indigestible, and therefore tried the more likely-looking dried bait.

"Wind up the others quick, Pat," quoth I, "or we shall have a foul."

No sooner had Pat begun to reel in the third rod, than he also hooked a large fish; and then, indeed, we were in rather a fix. There being a good wind, the boat was rapidly drifting towards some rushes, and I well knew that if we once got amongst them it would be good-bye to the fish.

"Give me the other rod, Pat, and pull as hard as you can to the shore."

And pull he did. Never, during the course of our adventures, did the boat go quicker. In a very little time we were both ashore, and each playing his fish. I soon got a view of mine.

"Bedad," said Pat, all of a sudden, "but divil a pike it is at all, but a be-utiful trout."

And so it was, a splendid lake trout of some 7 lbs. I soon had the satisfaction of landing him, and then ran off to help Pat, whose fish had taken him some distance along the bank. He, indeed, was fast into a very heavy fish of some description, though we did not as yet know what he was. He would suffer himself to be dragged hand over hand, and then, just as I thought we should get a glimpse, off he would go again with a tremendous rush.

At last we got him near enough to see him. No wonder he rushed, for I saw in an instant he was a tremendous fellow of a pike, such as I had never seen before; but, alas! the biggest always seem to bear charmed lives; for while almost in the act, and when I could see the monster distinctly, the hold—from, I suppose, such continual play—gave way, and, though I could hardly believe it, he was gone. It must have been a fish of at least 40 lbs., and taking off, say, the five pounds which disappointed fishermen are usually supposed to stick on to the weight of a lost fish, he would even then have been a monster.

I got a bigger a few days after; though, not knowing the luck destined for me, I could not help feel-

ing disappointed then. However, it could not be helped. There were evidently more in the lake, for I had heard, as I thought, one strike not far off; we could easily throw our line from the shore, and I thought I knew about the spot, it being close to where I had killed the trout. But, oh, horror!

"Where's the boat, Pat?"

"Oh, Lord, yer hononr! didn't I tell yer it was a quare baste! Divil a bit would the thief go when we were in it; and, faith, now it's off like a steamer."

Indeed, it was too true. In our hurry to get ashore and play our fish, we had forgotten to securely fasten the boat; and, from its being hid from our view by a little promontory, it had started a tour on its own account, unperceived by us. Luckily, in the course of an hour it drifted to the opposite shore, where, at the imminent peril of falling in (for I had to stand on a shaky bog, and throw my spoon bait into the boat, and so foul-hook it and drag it ashore), we at length got in again, and rowed over to where I had left the trout, which Pat had not yet seen, and which was on the opposite shore.

As we neared the side I remarked, with an unpleasant suspicion hovering in my mind, that I could not see my spotted beauty where I had left him.

"Jumped up behind some tuft of grass," I suggested to myself; for I recollected that, in my hurry to assist Pat, I had not quite killed it. But, alas! the suspicion was but too well founded; and then I remembered the splash I had heard whilst Pat was playing his fish, and knew I had lost my capture, which—with that disagreeable instinct, smell, or whatever it is, fish have—had jumped straight back to its native element.

The trimmers we left in, intending to take them up on our way the next day; so, grumbling, we trudged to the cottage where we had arranged for shelter. If I had known the sport to follow on the morrow, perchance I should not have complained.

TORPEDO NETS.—It is probable that a couple of months or more will elapse before the *Thunderer* is commissioned by Captain Wilson. In the meantime some experiments are to be tried, under Captain Morgan Singer, with dummy torpedoes, which will be discharged against the torpedo nettings, with the object of ascertaining whether they can force the crinolines before exploding, and thus batter in the hull. This is the only protection with which it is deemed possible at present to provide our iron-clads against the fish-torpedo. The *Thunderer* is fitted with a torpedo net, which extends along the whole of her starboard side, and which is capable of being boomed out upwards of thirty feet; and when this has been tested, she will doubtless be similarly protected on the port side. Even should the new and improved Whitehead not be able to penetrate the meshes of the netting—and this is a mere matter of detail, since the wire can be thickened to any extent—the question will remain as to the effect upon the hull of the *Thunderer* of a torpedo exploding against the netting itself, although some valuable information in this direction was derived from the experiments against the *Oberon* at Portsmouth.

The Egotist's Note-book.

THE infant fight for life in our land forms the basis of the Christmas Annual of ONCE A WEEK, which will be entitled "Hush-a-bye Baby," and is from the pen of Geo. Manville Fenn, author of "Ship Ahoy," and the three following annuals of this periodical—namely, "Sixty per Cent.," "Jack in the Box," and "Land Ahead."

Mr. Buckstone, who is now on a final provincial tour with the Haymarket company, played at the old theatre in Bristol a short time since. His feebleness increased each night, till he took his benefit, that performance being most painful to witness. He had to be led on to and off the stage on every occasion of his appearance. He spoke most of the dialogue while sitting on a chair, to which he was assisted, and he had to be supported while speaking a few parting words, and begging to be excused from playing in the afterpiece.

It is stated of Von Wrangel that he had a son, as the story goes, a young officer, who led a fast life, and got into debt. This is a grave offence against military discipline, and involves dismissal in disgrace. Young Wrangel carried his heavy burden as long as he could, and then threw himself upon his father's mercy, confessed his fault, and besought him to pay the debts, and save his honour. The stern veteran looked his son calmly in the eye.

"Sir, you cannot save your own honour; and you can save the honour of the Wrangel name only by blowing your brains out with your revolver."

That was all. The young man retired to his room, put a pistol to his head, and shot himself on the spot. He had literally obeyed his father and his military superior; and for years afterwards it was related as characteristic of Wrangel's stern nature that he never shed a tear for his son, never mentioned his name, and never suffered it to be mentioned in his presence.

A new invention has been patented in France for "driving by electricity." Under the coachman's seat is placed an electro-magnet, from which one wire is carried along one of the reins to the horse's bit, and another to the crupper, so that the whole length of the animal's spine forms part of an electric circuit. A sudden shock, which the driver can administer at discretion, will, it is said, bring the most obstreperous runaway to a sudden stop (?), and will arrest the most inveterate jibber. A series of small shocks will stimulate a "screw to marvels of pace and style."

Let us suppose a Singalese farmer has decided to plant his field with rice. To begin with, he cannot do so without first obtaining a licence. Nor when the crop is ripe can he reap, or cut, or thresh, or carry without a special permission for each of these acts. But the crop being ripe, then his troubles begin. Out of the produce of his land he must pay Government one-tenth part by way of tax or rent. Now, Government, either unwilling or unable to

collect this tenth themselves, farm it out to "paddy renters," and it requires a knowledge of Asiatic character to understand what this really means. To say it is extortion in its worst form, supplemented by vexatious interferences and intolerable delays in reaping and storing, is a mild way of stating the case. Even where the grain is rotting on the ground it may not be gathered in or touched. Should it by chance be reaped without permission, the "renter" would have the whole matter in his own hands. And this takes place under a British Government, while we abuse the Turks!

A Russian colonel of artillery, wishing to get some good recruits for his batteries, succeeded in inducing a number of young architects and builders to join, by promising to secure for them at the close of the war the contracts to rebuild all the public buildings they destroyed. And it was remarkable to see with what precision those young fellows were soon able to fire.

At the recent review in the Bois de Boulogne, four young Parisians wanted to get good places without paying much, or, for the matter of that, anything at all for them. They were well-dressed, and had a respectable-looking carriage. Putting a bold face on the matter, they ordered the coachman to drive up to the enclosure reserved for the members of the Government and their friends.

"You can't pass here," said the soldier on duty at the entrance.

"We belong to the *suite* of the President," said one of the four.

"But the Marshal has not come yet," replied the soldier.

"Exactly so, but we've come on beforehand."

And they were allowed to pass, though the sentry was considerably puzzled to make out how persons who preceded the Marshal could belong to his *suite*.

Youthful simplicity: "Mamma, how can they tell a sweep among the negroes?"

"Get me a carriage, John."

"There are none but open carriages, sir, and it rains."

"Then get me one with a big driver; he'll keep some of the wet off."

"Jones is a good-hearted fellow, a real friend when you want one."

"How so?"

"How so? Why, he's lent you money, hasn't he?"

"He did lend me some; and the other day, when I offered it to him again, by Jove, he took it!"

On the club steps:—

"I say, tell me why you call yourself a Liberal?"

"Why do you ask me such a question?"

"Because, if I were a Liberal, it would be impossible for me to say why I was one."

Here are a few Russian proverbs:—

When power is divided, it is soon destroyed.

God is high up, and the Czar is far off.
Give glory to God, and a candle to the priest.
Man has many enemies, but only one pair of arms.
When the high priest is hungry, he robs like a thief.

Misfortune begets misfortune. You escape the wolf to be devoured by the bear.

Beware of a tame wolf, a baptized Jew, and a reconciled enemy.

The thief is not always stealing, but it is necessary to be always on the watch for him.

The rich man, when he fights, tries to protect his face; but the poor man is more careful about his clothes.

An old man repents of that of which a young man boasts.

If you give a shirt to a beggar he will complain that the linen is coarse.

Measure ten times, but only cut once.

The finest needles make the deepest punctures.

If you eat cherries with your superiors, they will pelt you with the stones.

The anger of the Czar is the ambassador of death.

Mr. Wiseacre attended the sale of his brother's furniture. His own son was heir to the estate; but every time that the latter wished to buy anything, Mr. Wiseacre bid furiously against him.

"Don't you see," said one of his friends to him, "that you are making your son pay three times the value of the things?"

"Just so, but he'll have a bigger fortune to receive, won't he?"

"You trust to the sword," cried a French Republican to a supporter of the Marshal.

"Yes," replied the latter, "I prefer the sword to the dagger."

During the warm weather:—

"Mr. Milkman, your milk seems very watery."

"Not surprisin', ma'am, just now—the cows do drink so."

Tommy came home from school, and handed to his father the master's report on his progress during the month.

"This is very unsatisfactory, Tom; you've a very small number of good marks. I'm not at all pleased with it."

"I told the master you wouldn't be, but he wouldn't alter it."

The learned Attorney-General, in opening the case for the prosecution of the Scotland-yard detectives, thus referred to the charge against Mr. Froggatt, one of the defendants, when commenting upon the duties of professional men:—"Now, Froggatt is a solicitor, and his duty is to use his best exertions to obtain the acquittal of his client. He is bound to use all the knowledge and skill he is possessed of, and to do everything that is proper to secure the interests of his client. But then if he goes further than that, and, knowing his client's guilt, tries to get rid of the evidence that may be obtained against him, and endeavours to obtain the

acquittal of his client by such means, he ceases to be his advocate, and becomes his accomplice." It is difficult, writes the *Law Times*, to take any exception to the general proposition here laid down by the chief law officer of the Crown. The word "proper," as here used, is one the precise meaning of which it is not always easy to determine. So the expression "knowing his client's guilt," must be taken to mean "believing his client's guilt."

OF the superstition of the Russian peasantry Mr. Wallace gives some striking instances. The strangest is the following:—One winter evening there appeared in a peasant's cottage a female figure draped as St. Barbara is commonly represented. Introducing herself as the saint, she sat down, and commenced an edifying discourse. Before long the cottage was besieged by an inquisitive but reverential throng, from which not a soul in that village or the adjacent one stayed away. About midnight she rose, announcing that she was going to fetch St. Nicholas, but that no one must go away during her absence. So the villagers stayed where they were, awaiting the return of St. Barbara and the arrival of St. Nicholas. They waited till sunrise, and then many of them discovered that the pretended saint had decamped, taking with her a number of their horses.

To the credulity of the Russian peasant there appears to be no limit. About the time of the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage, for instance, a report spread abroad that a female conscription was about to be made, and that a large number of young girls were to be sent to England in a red ship. In what is styled their religious life, also, the Russian peasants often evince a singular credulity. A robber kills a peasant, "but refrains from eating a piece of cooked meat which he finds in his cart, because it happens to be a fast day." An artizan, who is going to break into the rooms of a young Austrian attaché, first "enters a church, and commends his undertaking to the protection of the saints," after which he murders the young Austrian in question. A robber finds it difficult to extract the jewels from an Icon, "and makes a vow, that if a certain saint assists him, he will make him a present of some of the plunder."

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

The Egotist's Note-Book.

WHAT are we to do for pantomime imps this year, since the School Board at Liverpool have expressed disapproval of Mr. Saker taking the children from school for this purpose? The clerk of the board said Mr. Saker would be liable to a fine of £2 per head for every child so employed during school hours.

Here is a fresh war between the Crescent and the Cross, and this time of a very sanguine hue; for Dr. Crookshank, the chief medical officer of the British National Aid Society, writes to the *Levant Herald* repudiating all connection with the Red Crescent Society. He declares that the latter's ambulance is a failure, one of its doctors being dismissed for theft, and the other for disgraceful behaviour. Dr. Crookshank says the Red Cross has never received any assistance from the Red Crescent, and never will.

Who does not remember Evans's, with its hot suppers and bachelordom! Alas! it has gone the way of the music halls, after holding out for years, and now announces itself as "open for the reception of ladies."

I am beginning to believe in the Prophet, and have serious thoughts of studying my Koran most diligently; for here is a piece of news:—"Great excitement prevails at Constantinople, which has been increased by a rumour that the Prophet has appeared to the Sultan commanding him to conclude peace." This is sensible, and the best piece of work his Prophethood ever did.

Happy, gentle Turk! Here is some of the last news from the garden of Gul and the Rose:—"Placards were recently posted up in Stamboul calling upon the people to assassinate Mahmud Damat Pacha, who was accused of intending to bring about peace and betray Turkey to Russia. On the other hand, Mahmud Damat Pacha accuses the ex-Sultan Murad of conspiring, in consequence of which the Sultan had his brother removed from the palace of Teheragan to the old Seraglio. This was forcibly opposed by forty of Murad's servants, who considered his life in danger, in consequence of which they were strangled. An attempt to poison Mahmud Damat Pacha has been frustrated by his physician."

Mr. Montagu Williams has been making quite a flowery speech on behalf of his client at the Old Bailey. He alliteratively speaks of Benson as "the hero of the *salon*; the composer of French *chansonnettes* at shady, sheltered, seaside Shanklin;" and goes on to say, "Do you know the spot?" Of course I do. It is famous for its Chine; and Benson, having plenty of that personal material vulgarly called *cheek*, naturally went to the Chine. Cheek and chine go together in connection with retirement—*vide the Monks of Old*. Farther on, Mr. Montagu Williams goes on to say, "If we believed in the transmigration of souls, we could almost imagine that the souls of Titus Oates and Dangerfield were

in the bodies of Benson and Kurr." This is too bad; for according to that doctrine the soul goes into that of a lower animal, and it is just like telling the jury that those two refined gentlemen—Messrs. Kurr and Benson—are a pair of beasts.

A 'bus driver and conductor have been summoned for not drawing their omnibus close up to the pavement for a passenger to get in, and preferring to stay in the middle of the road. Did the prosecutor never read the little scrap in *Punch*, nor study the little accompanying wood-cut, where a passenger objects to alight in the muddy road, and the conductor bawls over the roof words to this effect—"Here, Bill, you must draw up very close to the pavement, for the gent as is inside has to clean his own boots?"

What will the surgeons do next? Here is an account from a medical paper:—"A little girl, with a large granulating surface of about seven inches square, the result of a burn, recently came under my care. I procured cicatrisation (and without any contraction) of the greater part of this surface, by means of the insertion of more than 300 skin-grafts. But, then, my supply of skin, not unnaturally, came to an end. I had resort in my difficulty to a young pig; and a few days ago I inserted upwards of twenty grafts of his skin, and with very good results. I can now see my way, I hope, to a successful termination of the case, provided I am not interfered with by the Society for the Utter, Total, and Immediate Suppression of Vivisection. I am not forgetful of the sorrows of the pig; but he suffers in very good company, most of his fellow-victims being sisters of mercy."

Apropos of talking in Court, a good story is told of Campbell Foster, who was once addressing a jury, and was much annoyed by Digby Seymour's carrying on a conversation the while. Presently he lost all patience, and in his best brogue, said—

"Pray, Mr. Saymour, be quiet."

"My name is not Saymour—it's Seymour," corrected Digby.

Whereupon Foster angrily rejoined—

"Then, sir, see more and say less."

Some one is rude enough to say that as King George III. was breakfasting at Kew, the great scarcity of beef then prevailing in England became the subject of conversation:—"Why do not people plant more beef?" asked the King. Upon being told that beef could not be raised from the seed, he seemed still incredulous. He took some bits of beefsteak, and went into the garden and planted them. The next morning he went out to see if they had sprouted, and found there some snails. Thinking they were oxen, he was heard calling out, "Here they are! Here they are, Charlotte, horns and all!"

It is said that Mr. Cobden once asked an American lady why her country could not rest satisfied with the immense unoccupied territories it already possessed, but must ever be lusting after the lands of its neighbours. The lady instantly replied, "The propensity is a bad one, I admit; but we came honestly by it, for we inherited it from you."

In Difficulties.

SPORTSMEN who have traversed the wilds of many lands unanimously agree that the district which lies between Coimbatore and Mysore, in the neighbourhood of the Bellirungum Hills, is the perfection of a shooting country.

The Park district of Ceylon is highly blessed by nature; the intermixture of wood and plain to be found in Southern Africa rejoices a hunter's heart; but nowhere can such a beautiful diversity of forest and grassy glades, swarming with wild beasts, be enjoyed to such perfection as in the district alluded to.

Here bison and bears, elephants and tigers, cheetah and sambur, are to be found in profusion; but, as in most of the pleasures of life, the rose has its thorn, for the climate of these jungles is deadly. Some years ago a native infantry regiment had to march from Coimbatore to Mysore through the heart of this pestiferous forest. On the first day's march an alarming report was received from the commanding officer saying that a number of his men had been stricken with jungle fever, and begging for additional transport for the sick. On the second day a further despatch was sent in, to say that more than half their number were ill and helpless, and that the troops could not march further. Carts and pioneers were forwarded immediately, and the regiment, perfectly crippled, and with half its men in a dying state, was with difficulty extricated from the dangerous locality. It is only at night that the malaria appears to be so noxious. But all these dangers will not frighten keen sportsmen, and many have suffered in consequence.

In the most beautiful part of this district conical hills shoot up to a height of over a thousand feet from the forest below; and many years ago an ardent lover of the rifle erected a small bungalow on the top of one of these hills, to which he ascended every evening after the sport of the day. The result was most satisfactory; but his example was not followed, and the bungalow soon disappeared. If a good pony path had been made, the fatigue of the ascent would have been *nil*; and it is curious that no one has ever had the energy to carry out the plan, and thus render this deserted ground a sportsman's paradise.

Here that magnificent beast the American bison is commonly met with; and no game gives greater excitement in its pursuit than this noble animal. A rogue elephant is a dangerous beast; tiger shooting on foot is hazardous sport; but for intense and determined viciousness, a wounded bison is the most formidable foe that the sportsman has to meet. There are many species of the Bos tribe. The American bison is a wholly different animal from its Indian namesake, and both differ entirely from the wild buffalo of Ceylon. Gigantic animals, closely resembling the American denizens of the plains, but of larger size, are still, though very scarce, to be found in the dense forests of the Caucasus. But the Indian bison stands alone as the noblest of his kind. A good bull will measure seventeen hands in height, with wide-spreading horns as large as a Herefordshire ox, and much heavier; an immensely muscular

frame, and fine, powerful, but thoroughbred-looking legs, he is the embodiment of strength and activity. Whilst unwounded, bisons are usually shy, and avoid contact with men; but when once injured, they will fight to the death, and attack with a determination that no other animal can exceed.

Against this game large-bored rifles with heavy charges of powder are absolutely requisite, and gun-makers as yet have scarcely fully succeeded in producing breechloaders that will carry these heavy charges without detracting from the accuracy of the rifle.

With animals that will hit you again, you must be able to hit hard, and to give a blow that paralyzes offensive action at once.

And then in India a good gun-bearer—a man who will never think of firing himself unless his master is in difficulty, and who will thrust the second gun into the expectant hand without necessitating the withdrawal of the eye from the danger in front—is a treasure beyond all price. Why, men are to be met with who constantly act as gun-bearers I cannot understand, for they have all the danger and none of the sport. But rare specimens are to be found, who seem thoroughly to identify themselves with their masters, and who will never flinch in the moment of most extreme peril. Such treasures should be jealously guarded and most liberally rewarded, for they are very scarce, and amply deserve every remuneration. As a rule, when the moment of danger comes, the gun-bearer will be seen going up a tree with an agility that an acrobat might envy, and the sportsman finds himself left to the resource of the last barrel—sometimes not even that.

I shall not easily forget my first experience with bison in the forests of the Madras Presidency. I had never met these animals; but news having come in that one had been tracked into some neighbouring jungle, I started out alone with some beaters, to try if we could drive him out and get a shot. Driving is always a very uncertain operation, and in a thickly wooded country, with only one gun, it gave me but little hope of a successful issue.

But the head man of my beaters was sanguine. He knew the country well, and, I must say, selected an excellent spot, in which I, with an attendant gun-bearer, was silently posted. There was a small ravine fringed with jungle running up a hill. On either side the ground was open, and entirely free from brushwood; but covered with coarse grass that reached a little above the knee in walking. Below this again was thick forest. The beaters were to drive up hill, and of course down wind. The hope was that the bison might break out of the jungle near the ravine, or force its way up it.

We waited quietly and patiently for nearly an hour before we faintly heard the shouts of the beaters in the far distance. Then their quaint, queer cries became distinctly audible, and we stood with every nerve strung and the rifle ready. I was on the edge of the main jungle, so as not to frighten back any animal that might be inclined to break out on the open ground. Soon there was a slight rustling, and a frightened little hog deer dashed past me. Then something crashing through the jungle was heard, and a grand old wild boar

broke out only twenty yards off, but was of course allowed to pass unscathed. Next, a magnificent spotted buck, with an almost black back and beautiful head, walked forth within easy shot. Mechanically I threw up the rifle and covered him; but a distant sound told of nobler game, and I lowered it again without pulling the trigger, for now the noise of some ponderous animal forcing his way through the dense jungle was plainly heard. He came on slowly, occasionally stopping, and apparently listening to the shouts that every moment grew nearer.

It was evident that the bison was pushing right up the ravine, and I ran forward on to the open ground, so as to watch the spot where the wood that fringed it was most clear. I could see some large animal moving through it; but the undergrowth was so dense that it was impossible even thoroughly to discern the outline of his body. I was about twenty yards from the jungle, and there was not one moment to be lost, for beyond this spot it grew thicker and thicker. I had a powerful double-barrelled rifle, and a smooth-bore in reserve with my gun-bearer. Making a guess for the shoulder, and with but a faint hope of a successful result, I fired. In an instant all was perfectly still, and, as the smoke cleared away, my first impression was that I had made a lucky shot and killed the bison, notwithstanding the dense underwood that concealed him; but I had not heard the fall which usually tells of success, and listened anxiously, every moment expecting it; but nothing moved, and all was quiet as death.

I was puzzled, and was just on the point of reloading, preparatory to peering more closely into the jungle, when in one instant the wooded screen burst aside, and a magnificent bull dashed straight at me in full charge. Although only about twenty yards off, I could not see a vital spot to fire at. A glance to the left showed me my gun-bearer making for the nearest trees. I knew that I had but that one barrel to depend upon, and determined, with the quick inspiration that comes in moments of danger, to wait until the bison got close to me, and lowered his head, and then to fire near the neck and front of the shoulders. He was not twelve feet off when the chance was given, and I threw up the rifle and pressed the trigger. It was one of those damp days when the smoke hangs, and I sprang to the right, so as, if possible, to avoid his horns. But for a moment I could see nothing. In another instant he was seen reeling towards the jungle, just where the gun-bearer had taken refuge. The latter was going up a tree with the agility of a monkey, and my gun was lying thrown upon the ground. The bison was soon lost to view, and I reloaded as fast as possible.

"Take care," cried the man, from his elevated position—"master not go in, he plenty close."

But what could one do? I knew he was very badly wounded, and did not want to lose him. A small nullah ran through the wood, and along this I crept; for the beast was really close at hand, and standing still. Suddenly there was a crashing fall, and the enormous animal rolled over into the nullah, not ten yards in front of me, stone dead. He

was a splendid specimen of a bull. We cut off his head with great trouble, and it was a good load for four men to carry. The first shot had entered his flank, but the second was in a deadly direction. We made our way back to camp, rather proud of our success, and, though years have passed since then, I have not forgotten the narrow shave that I had with that first bull bison.

Another very narrow escape I had was some years later, when shooting in Eastern India by the banks of one of the great rivers.

It was a lonely country, but terribly burdened in places with swamps. My plan of progress was to go along the river in a boat with which our little party was provided, and land at villages for sleeping and at suitable places for sport. One morning, the old chief of the place came and brought an elephant with him to carry me through the mud to our boat, which was still lying in the shallow water where we had left her. I was very glad to have the use of the animal, for several reasons, and thanked the old man cordially for his thoughtfulness. But I had some difficulty in depositing myself with comfort on the curious saddle, which consisted of only a couple of trestles placed transversely on the beast, with a bar resting in the crutches of the upper forks for people to sit upon. This arrangement was so strongly suggestive of the unpleasant process of riding on a rail, that I did not at all like the look of it. However, with the aid of a pillow and a couple of railway rugs, I managed to make it comfortable.

It did not look so bright and gay as usual that day; for the sky was heavily clouded, and a dark, threatening thunderstorm gathering fast. Rain being thus evidently at hand, it behaved us to find shelter as speedily as possible; and consequently we landed at a lovely spot, and solicited the hospitality of the poonghee, which, as usual, was gracefully and kindly accorded.

We had hardly removed our bedding and more perishable stores from the boat to the poonghee house, when a terrific storm broke over the place, equalling, if not exceeding, in violence any that I had previously experienced. The lightning was painfully vivid and constant, and the peals of thunder, following almost instantaneously upon the flashes, crashed over our heads in a series of deafening reports, like those caused by the firing of salvoes by parks of heavy artillery.

Darkness came on apace, and, as cooking seemed to be impracticable amidst the wind and rain, we had to content ourselves with a cold dinner. After which, while the storm was still raging outside, we retired to our respective couches, to seek, under the circumstances, a somewhat doubtful rest. I had just got to sleep, when a soft, large substance came flop down on the floor close to my head, followed immediately by the fall of a heavier and harder body a few inches farther off. For a single moment I could not imagine what had happened, but an angry exclamation from a voice I knew at once cleared up the mystery. I was afoot in a twinkling, and found my unlucky companion half-way through the floor, with his bed in his arms. He was so tightly wedged in between the bamboos, that it was

a minute or two before I succeeded in helping him on his legs again. We then struck a light, and investigated damages. Fortunately, he was only slightly scratched and bruised; but, if two or three more of the faithless bamboos had given way, the consequences might have been serious, owing to the height of the poonghee-house above the ground. It appeared that the rain had made a sudden rush through the roof, just over the spot where he had placed his bed; and consequently, to avoid being half drowned, he was compelled to decamp in the hastiest manner possible. It was whilst in search of a drier corner that the catastrophe alluded to occurred, by the snapping of one of the bamboos in the floor, which were old, and probably unused to the weight of Europeans, especially when laden with bed and bedding.

The weather up to this time had improved but little; the rain was still falling in torrents, the lightning flashing, and the thunder rattling at intervals, while the wind, which had already blown away the side of the house (bamboo matting only, however), threatened every moment to complete its work of ruin and carry off the roof. We were rather surprised to find that, notwithstanding the warfare of the elements, the rocking of the house, and the constant associate noises of many kinds, our servants were all sleeping as tranquilly as possible.

The next morning proving very fine, we were under way soon after seven o'clock, and about nine stopped at a suitable place, where I landed, with one of our servants, a black, named Ali, and wandered inland for some distance, in search of game of some kind for a change for dinner; but somehow that morning nothing was to be obtained, search how I would. It was nothing but tramp, tramp, tramp through the dense undergrowth, which tore my legs and hands, while branches flew back in my face; and at last I gladly welcomed a rather more open spot, where the forest trees were of greater size, and taking my place beneath one of them, I determined to sit down and let the game come to me, instead of trying to go to it.

Ali was to make the best use of his eyes he could, and I suppose he thought the best use was to shut them up. At all events, we both were so tired and hot that we dropped off to sleep, and I was awakened by Ali touching my arm, when, starting to my feet, I found him pointing straight before him, and there, not twenty yards away, were ten or a dozen elephants, slowly making their way through the jungle, breaking down and devouring the branches as they went. I was just debating in my mind as to whether I should fire at one of them—for it was not the sort of game I wanted, or should care to eat—when I heard a sound like some one snorting through a pipe, and, turning my head sharply on the side where I felt myself touched, there was the great wet end of a huge proboscis extended close to my face; and as Ali shrieked out, "Oh, massa, massa! run massa," I turned farther round, and found myself face to face with the largest elephant I had ever seen.

His tusks were small, but very sharp, and his great ears flopped gently to and fro, while the monster stared at me with his little, red, pig's eyes,

waved his proboscis up and down as if about to twist it round my neck, and then uttered a peculiar cry, which sounded like the word "phoonk" spoken through some great tube.

I thought it was all over, for I was so close to the monster's feet that he could have beaten me down and crushed me in an instant, when suddenly one of the elephants in the wood behind me uttered a shrill cry of alarm, and the monster before me turned as on a pivot, and went crashing and lumbering through the wood.

As for me, I was too much startled to fire, and did not feel better till I reached the boat.

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER XXII.—ASSAULT AND BATTERY.

"HALF-PAST six," said the Squire. "They might have been here an hour ago. I'm not going to eat my mutton with the gravy all full of sixpences, and the fat sticking to the roof of my mouth like venison. Ring the bell, Alice, and we'll have it up directly."

"Give them another ten minutes," said Mrs. Vaughan, "for I don't think poor Stephen had any lunch after all."

"Not ten seconds," said the Squire, stoutly. "Here's Miss Maddy, and Miss Newman as well, looking quite famished."

"Pray don't hurry the dinner upon my account," said Madeline—"I can very well wait."

A remark which was backed by Annie Newman, who could not keep a warm glow out of her cheek, nor her eyes off the door; while every time it was opened she started and trembled—all of which looked as if the poor girl were unwell.

"Hum!" said the bluff old gentleman. "In my young days I don't think I should have kept you waiting for me long; but then young men were different in those times to what they are now—weren't they, my dear?"

"Now, you know very well I detest flattering," said Mrs. Vaughan; "and yet, with all your grey hairs, you are as fond of it as ever. I am no courtier, so you try in vain."

Dinner was soon after announced; and the party repaired to the dining-room, where, when all were seated, the three empty chairs placed for the truants seemed sadly in want of tenants. Directly each dish had been partaken of, it was sent down by Mrs. Vaughan—but under protest from the Squire—to be kept hot until the gentlemen came in; while the cook declared that it was a shame, and she wouldn't stand it. And at last the dinner was finished, but without a sign of the gentlemen.

"I hope nothing has happened," said Mrs. Vaughan, turning Madeline quite pale at the thought of another accident. "Surely they have not been so foolish as to let Mr. Phipps drive again!"

Alice bit her lip, and gave her head a slight toss, as though she could not see anything so very foolish in allowing that gentleman to drive.

"Pooh, nonsense!" said the Squire—"no fear of that. Boys like them never get hurt much. They'll

come in presently. Why, if I had upset the dog-cart to-day, like they did, old Childe would have brought me in a twenty pound doctor's bill, safe."

Back in the drawing-room, with the urn hissing upon the table, and the ladies playing at "cat's cradle," or "scratch cradle," or whatever the proper title may be, with some wondrous cotton tangle, which they were weaving into a pattern looking like round holes encircled with cotton spikes. Mrs. Vaughan was making the tea; while the Squire, leaning back in his easy chair, was thinking, and aiding his cogitations by stroking the cat upon his knee from the tip of its nose to the very end of its long, lithe tail, till the fur crackled as it sent forth tiny sparks of electricity, while the animal itself purred forth its satisfaction.

The tea was poured out, and its fragrant odour spread around; but still no gentlemen.

"How dreadfully rude!" whispered Alice to her friends; "I'm quite ashamed of them."

"I hope nothing is wrong," replied Madeline; while Annie only looked anxious, and took another glance towards the door.

"I have it," cried Alice, aloud; "and it's too bad of them."

"What is, my dear?" said Mrs. Vaughan.

"Why, the tiresome, selfish things have stopped to go to the race-ball," cried Alice, with her face flushed with vexation.

And she nodded her head a great many times, as much as to say, "But I'll be even with them."

"No, they haven't," said the Squire, after listening to the various surmises that succeeded the ball theory. "They haven't gone to the ball. But I tell you what it is—there isn't a doubt about it. They're stuck!"

And the old gentleman said this in the most decided manner.

"They're what?" exclaimed Mrs. Vaughan.

"Stuck," said the Squire—"stuck fast at Edgerton. No conveyance to be had, as a matter of course, upon race-day; and then, as Alice says, it's ball night, too; which is all what the newspapers call corroborative evidence. Well, if I had been in their place, and with their young legs, I should have walked."

"Oh, papa," cried Alice; "why, it's nine miles to the course!"

"And so dark and lonely!" said Mrs. Vaughan.

"Pooh!" said the Squire. "What are nine miles? But, heigho!" he sighed, "if the young fellows had been here we should have had some music; while, under the circumstances, there's nobody to sing to but a simple old farmer, and of course it is out of the question—eh, Miss Maddy?"

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Alice. "I'm sure Madeline will sing if you ask her, instead of teasing so. Won't you, dear?"

"Ask her, of course I will," said the old gentleman. "But I wish somebody would ask me to smoke."

"Yes, do ask him to, Annie," cried Alice. "You won't mind it, will you, dears? He'll be so grumpy, and do nothing but tease if he does not have his pipe."

Annie protested that she would not mind; but

could not help thinking about her brother, and wondering whether he would smell it when she reached home. And then, the required solicitation having been made, the old gentleman proceeded to envelop himself in a cloud of vapour; while, free from affectation, Madeline crossed over to the piano, and leaving her tea to get cold, sang, in a sweet voice, the simple air, "Fading away."

The last notes were literally fading away, and the wires of the instrument vibrating with the concluding chords, when a buzz of voices was heard in the hall.

"Here they are!" cried Alice, bounding to the door.

But upon opening it, she started back again, with a faint scream that brought her father upon his legs, waking him out of the nap he had been sent into by the lulling tones of Madeline's soft, sweet voice; for, really, "Fading away," with all due respect to Miss Anne Fricker, is a delightful air to go to sleep by.

"Halloa!" exclaimed the head of the family, "what's the matter—poachers? Why, what the devil have you all been doing, eh?" he continued, as, followed by Mrs. Vaughan, Madeline, and Annie Newman, he hurried into the hall, where stood Tom Phipps and Stephen, supporting Frank between them—he looking deadly pale, and more than half stupefied; one of his arms hung helpless by his side; while, in place of a hat, a pocket-handkerchief deeply stained with blood was tied round his head. As for Tom Phipps, his mouth was puffed up, one of the lips cut open, and an eye completely closed—while his clothes were a happy combination of rags and mud.

Stephen, too, was in very little better plight; for one of his cheeks was badly cut; and as for his hands—to use Tom's *Bell's Life* phrase—they were completely "barked." So that, altogether, there really was some excuse for the Squire's very inelegant expressions.

But leaving words, the first proceeding was to place Frank upon the sofa, where he sank back with a half-suppressed groan; and then ensued a regular scene of bell-ringing, running in and out, wound-washing, and bandaging; while, in spite of their pale faces and anxious eyes, it was wonderful how calm and useful the younger ladies became; in fact, so attentive were they, that no bystander could have felt a spark of pity for the wounded men, on account of the envy that would have filled his breast.

Among other damages, that lucky dog, Frank, had received an ugly cut upon the head; but the gentle attention and sympathizing glances seemed to make it very bearable; while for medicine, the Squire mixed him a stiff glass of brandy-and-water, which seemed to bring him round a little, though it did not do what Tom Phipps prophesied cheerfully, but with a very rueful face, "set him upon his legs again," for he seemed to prefer lying still and receiving ministrations.

Every one whose services could be enlisted lent a hand to the sufferers; some fetched cold—some hot water; some myrrh, lint, diachylon, linen rag, handkerchiefs for making slings; it having been

unanimously declared that the services of the doctor were not required; while, no doubt in complete antagonism to all the laws of surgery, the Squire, for his part, kept pooh-poohing the idea of tea, and placing hot glasses of grog before each of the sufferers.

"Now, then," said the old gentleman, reverting to the question of the doctor, when all the wounds and contusions had received attention, and the basins, sponges, and rags had been cleared away—"Now, then, I think if the doses I prescribed are repeated by-and-by, we shall after all be able to do without old Childe, eh? You seem worst, Frank, or else sham the most. What do you say, shall we want the doctor?"

"Oh, no, not for me," said Frank, but in rather a faint voice; "leaving out marks, I think I shall be all right in the morning."

"I don't," said the Squire; "but, for all that, you seem to want no chopping, or sawing, or sewing up; and I dare say one of you ladies will try the effect of a little stitching upon Tom Phipps's lip."

Of course Tom professed his willingness to be operated upon, and the ladies declined the duty; while fresh water having been brought, and the tea distributed, the Squire, who had all along kept up a running fire of cross-examination questions, now called for a full explanation of the mishap.

"Now, then," said he, "it's only fair that we should have the full particulars. You seem to have come off the best, Master Tom; so, if that lip will work at all, suppose we have your version first?"

"Well, sir," said Tom, speaking in a peculiar lispy way, "to begin with, I may as well own that it was through my stupidity that it happened. But, first of all," he continued, dropping entirely his customary flippancy, and walking up to the sofa to take Frank's hand, "I have to thank you, old fellow, for the gallant way in which you protected me. For I'm such a cowardly, undersized little beggar, that I honestly believe that great, hulking brute of a fellow would have killed me."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Frank. "It was a case of brothers-in-arms."

"Ah!" groaned Tom, rubbing himself very softly, "I wish we could have made it a case of brothers-in-legs, and, avoiding their sticks, have cut ours. You see, sir," he continued, addressing the Squire, "we tried to get a dog-cart over yonder; but, after an hour and a half's hunt, the jolly a thing of any kind could we get but a donkey-cart, and it really was a stunning little donkey—went like winking. But his royal highness the Duke from Cambridge, there, declared that he would not set his legs within it to please anybody; and proposed that we should walk, in which he was aided and abetted by that monster with the bruised and cut face."

And so Tom Phipps continued his story. But the battering he had received, the excitement, and eke the brandy-and-water, made him so prolix, and necessitated so many interpolations from his friends, that it will be more to the reader's advantage if the words are taken out of the little gentleman's mouth and allowed to filter down through the pen of the writer in a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER XXIII.—BATTLE ROYAL.

THE racing had been concluded some time, and the course looked bare and dull; but not so the town, when the Waveley trio stood outside the door of the principal inn at Edgeton, when, as before related, Frank proposed, and Stephen seconded, that, failing a better conveyance than a donkey cart, they should walk to the Hall.

"It's barely eight miles to Waveley off end," said Frank, "and then less than two to the Hall—say nine miles."

"And plenty of mud, too," said a voice close by.

Frank turned sharply round upon the speaker, who was a rough, slouchy, ostler-looking fellow, standing with a knot of similar characters under the lamp close by.

"Nine miles," said Tom, pulling out his gold watch, "and now six o'clock. I'm not going to walk nine miles to-night."

"Nonsense," said Frank. "Why, with a few cigars to while away the time, we shall be there before we know where we are."

But Tom would not listen to what his friends called reason. He would consider the matter over a bottle of Bass; and therefore the party adjourned to the bar and the bottle of ale; when the obstreperous Tom was partly won over to his companions' way of thinking. And then the victory was completed by the application of another bottle of "lotion," as Tom termed the Burton brewing.

At the end of another ten minutes the party were striding manfully out of the town, with trousers rolled up, cigars lit, and every indication that the walk would soon be achieved. The evening had come in dark, for the young new moon was just setting behind the trees as they began to descend the main street; but the road had so often been traversed by the young men in bygone days, that every turn was perfectly familiar.

The clock of the old abbey church chimed a quarter to seven as they passed the grammar school, where the dormitory windows were lit up, and shadows flitting rapidly past, while now and then a dark body could be seen to pass before the light.

"Here! Look here!" cried Tom, arresting his companions—"bolstering, by Jove. There'll be a row about that, and it aint bedtime. There, look at that—there's a set-to up there! How it puts one in mind of old times!"

In effect, just then there seemed to be no ordinary scene enacting at the school; for, flitting past the windows, the figures of the boys could be seen, charging and retreating, as though a pitched battle were being fought, when suddenly the gas was extinguished, and all left in darkness. The trio then continued their walk, chatting about the old school and the events of the past day.

Before long the spot was reached where the upset had taken place; but the dog-cart had been removed, for they could find no traces of it as they passed. As they walked on, the conversation, which had been lively at the outset, became less continuous; so that by the time they had completed about one-third of the distance, the cigars were smoked almost in silence.

"Some one coming on after us pretty sharply," said Stephen, all at once, as he stopped short to listen.

Frank and Tom both pulled up, and, following Stephen's example, could hear distant footsteps, as of several people hurriedly following in the same direction, and evidently at something more than a good swinging walk.

"Come along," exclaimed Stephen.

And they continued their route. But before long they were passed by four men, whom they seemed to recognize in the dim starlight as a part of the group they saw outside the inn at Edgeton, and evidently members of that nomadic tribe to be met with at every race.

The men passed them with a rough "good night," and then continued straight on at a sharp rate, their steps becoming less and less audible, until they were heard no more.

"Now, where can they be bound for?" said Frank, when the party was well out of hearing.

"That's just what I was calculating," said Stephen. "There seems nowhere for them to be making for out this way. Ramsford's quite eighteen miles across country, and fearful roads. Pinxley—Waveley—there's nowhere else, unless they mean the Fighting Cocks, at Cobbleton. I can't bottom it; for there's nothing out here to attract strangers like them."

"Going to join the navvies on the new line somewhere, and try and get a lift in the trucks," suggested Tom.

"No; that's not it," said Frank. "That class of fellows does not mix with the navy at all. They have worked down this way from Doncaster, and belong, if they belong anywhere, to one of the large towns. You may depend upon it they are upon no good errand. I prophesy a robbery somewhere before morning. They are certainly not bound for the line; for the men don't work by night now they are through Pinxley tunnel."

"Oh, bother!" said Tom. "What does it matter? Hold hard a minute, my light's out. Confound it all, how muddy it is! I'm as tired as a dog!"

"Never mind the mud," said Stephen. "Step out my lads."

"I dare say you will laugh at me," said Frank, just as they were entering between the two rows of cottages dignified by the name of Smokeley-street—a hamlet consisting of about twenty labourers' tenements, a farmhouse, and a low beershop—"I dare say you will laugh at me; but I don't like the look of this, and honestly wish we had not come."

"Oh, step along," exclaimed Tom and Stephen. "We are in for it now, and shall soon be there."

"But I don't feel half satisfied," said Frank, musingly.

"Well, but who does?" said Tom. "Who does like it, or feel half satisfied? I know I don't, and shan't either until I get my legs under Squire Vaughan's mahogany. Catch me out again with such a pair of reckless drivers."

"Don't be an ass, Tom," said Frank, seriously. "Those fellows are up to no good. Do you remember pulling out your watch in front of the Chequers? I've been turning it over in my mind for the last

ten minutes, and, honestly, I believe that's what they are after."

"No; hang it all!" said Tom, pulling up short, and evidently quite taken aback—"but there, get out with you—you're chaffing. Come on, my lads," he continued, and then singing—

"Breathed in the words, I'm an Englishman."

"Oh, ah! of course we shall have a highway robbery by Dick Turpin and Tom King, supported, aided, and abetted by two footpads with craped faces and pistols; Claude Duval and Jerry Abershaw acting as a reserve body of cavalry. Never mind—'Britons never shall be slaves.' Who's afraid?"

"Well, may I be hanged if I'm not," said Stephen, giving his long arms a sort of windmill swing—"not quite afraid of those fellows, but afraid that there's some mischief brewing. What shall we do, Frank—go back, or stop here at Johnson's for the night? He would let us sit by his fire and smoke till morning. Or we might borrow a stout stick or two."

"I can't say I like the idea of either going back or stopping here," said Frank. "They would be all so anxious; and besides, it may after all be only my imagination. But at all events we will call at Johnson's and borrow a stick or two, and then let's push on. They would certainly be uneasy if we did not return; and if your father sent any one to meet us, and heard the reason for our halt, I can't say that I should like to meet him again."

"No," said Stephen, "he would call us all the curs and cowards he could think of. What do you say, Tom—shall we push on?"

"Push on?" said Tom, "of course. You're a clever pair, no doubt; but if you think I'm taken in with all this banter of yours, my boys, why you are precisely mistaken."

Banter or not, Tom's companions did not think it worth their while to test his credulity any further, but turned in at the little farmhouse, where they received a hearty welcome, and a glass of genuine home-brewed that satisfied the palate of even the fastidious, beer-loving Tom.

Burly farmer Johnson, upon being frankly told the object of their visit—namely, to borrow something in the shape of weapons of offence—said that there was no harm in being prepared, and he brought out a constable's staff, a stout walking stick, and, to the intense delight of Tom, a flail. Tom directly elected to handle the flail, as being a superb weapon, and gave it a twirling flourish which terminated in his placing to his own account a very sounding rap upon the head—flails being rather awkward instruments in the hands of tyros.

It was very evident, however, to Frank and Stephen, that their host was rather amused than otherwise; so, stoutly refusing his proffered company for a mile or two, and the big sheep-dog declining to follow them without his master, they once more set off to accomplish the remainder of their journey.

"Hang him!" said Frank, "I wish we had not gone; he was laughing at us the whole time."

"I don't wish so," said Stephen, quietly. "Take no notice; but is not that one of the fellows?"

They were just leaving the hamlet, and passing the open door of the beerhouse, when, as Frank

glanced on one side, he could see what appeared to be one of the four men standing in the open doorway, and apparently smoking, but, as it struck them, having an eye to their movements.

It was now if anything a little lighter, for the stars shone brightly; but, unfortunately for the travellers, a great deal of the road to come was overhung with trees, and for some distance lay through a deep cutting, where the sandy, martin-honeycombed banks were some forty feet high upon either side, making it in summer a delightfully shady place, and a beautiful walk, though anything but agreeable on an autumn or winter's night.

"Steve, old fellow," said Frank, when they were about fifty yards past the beershop, "that looks rather ominous. Just cast an eye back, and see if he follows."

Stephen Vaughan did so, and could just make out the man's figure as he passed the light streaming from the door. Upon mentioning to Frank what he had seen, the latter whispered—

"Keep on walking—don't stop; are there any more with him?"

"I can see no more," said Stephen, after a minute's scrutiny, during which he walked backwards; "but they may be with him for all that."

"Then," said Frank, "depend upon it they are on in front, ambushed; and that chap was left behind to watch us."

"I say," said Tom, speaking rather huskily, "pon my word, I thought you were chaffing all the while. This means milling, don't it? What are we going to do?"

"Why," observed Frank, "we must either go forward or go back, unless you can suggest anything better."

"I don't like fighting," said Tom—"at least I don't think I do, for I've not tasted it these ten years; and I don't like being robbed; and I don't like going back and looking spooney, for, after all, we don't know that anything will happen. I don't care," he continued, doggedly, "we're all in the mess, and I'm in a deuce of a stew, but I shall try and do as you do; but let's bolt if we can."

"Come along, then," said Frank, "and keep a bright look-out. There were only four; and surely we three, with right upon our side, ought to be a match for them. Do as I do—put your watches and chains in your trousers pockets along with your money, and step out; for perhaps, after all, I've only been raising up a bugbear to frighten you both."

"Boo—oomph—who's afraid?" cried Tom, puffing out his cheeks.

"Well, you must stick to us, Tom, if there is a row," said Stephen.

"All right!" cried Tom; but in a tone of voice which seemed to indicate that he thought it all wrong. And then, keeping closely together, and in silence, but keeping a keen look-out on both sides, they walked sharply on for about half a mile, to where the road dipped down between the high banks.

"Valley of the shadow of death," muttered Tom, in a whisper; "what a cut-throat-looking place by night!"

"Frank," whispered Stephen, "that fellow's closing

up fast; he's not far behind. Let's trot through here."

Keeping to a regular infantry double, they then set off, well closed in together; but they had not gone fifty yards before a shrill chirruping whistle made Tom stop as if electrified.

How he Married the Banker's Daughter.

ADOLPH Z. is young, not unprepossessing, and a clerk in a wealthy banker's office in Paris, on a salary of 2,000 francs a year. The banker has a pretty daughter of eighteen. Adolph has not a sou, but that does not deter him from waiting upon his employer one morning, and saying—

"Sir, I have the honour of asking your daughter's hand in marriage."

The banker, astonished, rang the bell, and told the waiter to throw Adolph out of the window.

"As you please," calmly said the clerk; "but before that is done, learn that I am about to become a partner in the London house of Bathurst and Co."

At this the banker softens.

"The proof, sir—the proof of what you say."

"Give me forty-eight hours in which to go to England, and I will bring you the proof."

Adolph hurries to London, presents himself at the office of Bathurst and Co., and says—

"I have to propose that you take me as a partner." And, as Mr. Bathurst looks as though he thought Adolph demented, he adds—"I am about to marry the daughter of M. P., of Paris."

Adolph is thereupon asked to be seated, they converse, and come to terms. The bright young man returns to Paris carrying to his future father-in-law the proof of his statement, and the young people are wedded.

History of Miss Corisande.

MISS CORISANDE was born only two years earlier than her brother Tom. When Tom was ten years old she gloried because she was twelve. When Tom was known to be fourteen she confessed to sweet sixteen. When Tom proudly boasted of eighteen she timidly acknowledged herself past nineteen. When he came home from college with a moustache and a vote, and had a party in honour of his twenty-first birthday, she said to her friends—

"What a boyish fellow he is! Who would think he was only a year younger than I?"

And when Tom declared he was twenty-five years and old enough to be married, she said to a gentleman friend—

"Do you know, I feel dreadfully jealous to think of Tom getting married. But then I suppose twins always are more attached to each other than other brothers and sisters."

And two years later, at Tom's wedding, she said, with girlish vivacity, to the wedding guests—

"Dear old Tom! To see him married to-day, and then think how, when he was only five years old, they brought him in to see me, his baby sister! I wonder if he thinks of it to-day."

You have met Miss Corisande, probably. She lives in your town.

A Very Bad Cold.

IT was ten o'clock. Jones was dry—hadn't been so dry since the strike—but there was no cash left. He knew that Mrs. J. had a little old Hennessy about the house, that she put in puddings; and he sat down on the door-steps, and wondered how he could save it from being wasted in such nonsense, as economy was his motto.

He looked up at the Dog-star, the Great Bear, and the Milkmaid's Path, but they were silent, and

"Oh, my!" and she shuddered.

Then she got a blanket, and put it over him, and said she would make him some hot tea. As she started for the kitchen, Jones called her back, and, with a sigh, suggested if there was a little whiskey about the house it would be better.

There wasn't a drop, but she had a little brandy for cooking purposes. Jones gave a shudder, and said it would answer if she had a little hot water and sugar to make it palatable. They were at hand in two minutes; and while she pulled off his boots,



"FEEL THAT HAND."

tending strictly to business. A scheme finally dawned on him, and he opened the door, and felt his way back to the ice-cooler, got up on a chair, and fished out a piece of ice, buttoned up his coat, and turned up his collar. Then he staggered upstairs, ice in hand, and met Mrs. Jones.

"What's the matter, Jones—been drilling?"

"No," said Jones, with a shiver.

"Another strike?"

"No. Chill," said Jones; and he sank into a chair, and slipped the ice into his coat-pocket—"feel that hand."

and wrapped the blanket around his feet, Jones mixed his toddy, and shivered.

He felt better afterwards, though.

He made up a terrible face when he emptied the glass, and told Mrs. Jones that she had saved his life. He retired ten minutes afterwards, singing—

"There's a land that bears a well-known name."

And Mrs. Jones never found him out, though she wondered what made his pocket so wet.

AN American "writerist" wishes to know why people always spell *finis* without the *h*.

Under the Yellow Flag.

CHAPTER XXII.

"KEEP back!" roared Timkin, as he saw a movement made as if to seize him; and then, as a wild cry arose from the water—a half-choked, bubbling cry—and the wretch disappeared, he thrust down the boat-hook, drew him up, and then guided him forward till he could hold him with one hand, when he passed the boat-hook to me.

As Timkin stooped, being now between us and the men forward, one of them made a dart at him, knife in hand, thinking to take him unawares; but the giant gave one back-handed blow; there was a dull thud, and the man fell back into the bows of the boat. Then, apparently without any effort, Timkin swung the half-drowned sailor on to one of the thwarts, and pale and trembling he crawled forward, to crouch there all of a heap.

"I'll be even with you for this," he whined. "I've got my knife into you for this. But there warn't no sharks after all."

"Warn't there?" cried Timkin, fiercely. "What's that, then?"

And stepping over the thwarts, he seized the man by the neck, and forced him to look towards where, about twenty yards off, appeared a small object moving through the water, when he shrank back trembling.

"Shark's back fin!" muttered Mr. Stayman.

"Now, hand up them knives," growled Timkin; and slowly and reluctantly the men gave up their dangerous weapons, which the great fellow deliberately transferred to his pocket, not noticing that the man farthest from him had hastily thrust the lanyard he wore round his waist out of sight below his great blue woollen shirt.

"I only meant to frighten him, gentlemen," whispered Timkin as he came aft, and smiled grimly at the half-frightened glances directed at him by the ladies; "but it's war now between us, and perhaps it's just as well, for there ain't never no trustin' them rough, uneducated men. I ain't much account myself, and as to book larnin', I am nowhere; but I knows my dooty as a sailor—to obey orders when I'm under orders, and to have 'em minded when I'm above orders. As for them, they are making their first voyage in a decent ship; most likely been in a coaster, or something of that sort, with a crew of four or five, where Jack's as good as his master. But we've got the weather-gauge of them, being more in numbers, and having the women to help to keep watch and take care of the prog."

"But about water?" whispered Mr. Stayman, hoarsely.

Timkin turned an uneasy glance at him, but made no answer—only trimmed the sail afresh, and then took a long eager look at the horizon.

"Most likely get picked up to-day," he said, cheerily.

And he glanced now at the women; but his words took no effect, and I could see that Eve was weeping bitterly.

I could not help it; my heart seemed to whisper,

"False, false, false," and yet I drew nearer to her, and muttered a few words of hope and resignation; but as I returned to my place with the men, I repented what I had done, for it seemed that there was triumph in the faint smile Graham directed at me, and I turned away frowning.

But that was no time for showing hatred, our end seemed so near; since we knew full well that existence without water, beneath the burning sun we encountered day by day, was impossible. As it was, even with the small allowance we had had so far, our agony of thirst had at times been extreme, till the cool night breeze set in, seeming to bring with it moisture to our parched tongues.

We had a little council together, and then, the wind having quite dropped, we stretched out the awning a little farther, so as to shelter the steersman from the sun as well as those who were not rowing, and then Timkin gave the word for oars.

But the men forward sullenly refused to row; and, with Mr. Stayman, who was the least muscular, steering, Timkin, Graham, and I took each an oar, and began to row, when Mrs. Black, who had until now been, as it were, prostrated with her grief, slowly rose from her place, kissed Eve tenderly, and then, without a word, went and took the tiller, thus setting Mr. Stayman at liberty, when he too came and took an oar, and we rowed on slowly, with the sun hourly gathering force and scorching us.

It had been arranged that Timkin should row the stroke oar, so as to be beyond reach of a foul blow from either of the men. I was next, then Graham; and the bow oar was taken by Mr. Stayman, who laughed at the danger, saying—

"They won't hurt me."

I saw Eve go and take a place beside Mrs. Black, and then she sat with her eyes fixed upon mine as I toiled at my oar.

The sun poured down, hotter and hotter, as we rowed slowly on, with blistered hands, hearts beating from weakness, and a strange feeling of languor seeming to rob us of such energy as we possessed. We toiled on, mile after mile, but with the vast space around us miles seemed as nothing, and had it not been for a sense of duty to the helpless women we should have lain there, trying to screen ourselves from the sun, and waiting for the evening breeze.

Suddenly, without his having uttered a complaint, Mr. Stayman's oar slipped from his hand with a faint splash; and we turned swiftly, to see what each had in his heart been expecting, though doubting who would go down first—the poor fellow with half-closed eyes, sinking back from his seat quite exhausted.

"In oars, gentlemen," said Timkin, gruffly. "No one ought to row in such a sun as this; but I wouldn't be the first to shirk. Lay him in the shade of the sail."

We laid Mr. Stayman out of the sun, though the boat was quite hot where he rested, and the pitch soft and running wherever it lay thickly upon the sides of the boat; and then bathing his face and head with the sea water he seemed to revive, turn-

ing upon us a grateful look, but pressing his hand to his head.

Once or twice that afternoon I felt a strange swimming myself in my head, but it seemed no time for complaining, and I bore up, taking my part in the duties marked out by Timkin, till evening came, and with it the breeze.

But this night it did not last for more than an hour, but fell calm again, with heavy, dark clouds obscuring the sky; and I was in dread lest there should be a repetition of the gale of a few nights before; but no, the night passed slowly and heavily, only broken by the muttering of some one sleeping, or a bitter sigh from beneath the matting where the women lay.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ANOTHER weary day—hot and dazzling. Not a breath of air, but the sun making every part of the boat so hot that it could hardly be touched. The biscuit had been served out, and there was still a portion for another day; but it was in many cases untouched, on account of the cruel thirst that had seized upon one and all. It was fully thirty-six hours since a drop of moisture of any kind had passed our lips, while the last portion served out had been utterly inadequate to our wants, since we were deprived of every other means of supplying moisture to the system.

The oars were not touched now, and the sail hung sluggishly flapping from the mast, as the boat rose and sank upon the heaving swell, which at times made it to rock heavily to and fro. Scarcely a word was spoken, each taking the biscuit passed to him or her, and then sitting in a dull, listless manner, waiting for help to come. The three sailors still kept together forward, muttering to each other a great deal at first; but they soon grew taciturn, and for hours together not a word would be spoken.

Another dull, heavy night passed; and then another day of torture, beneath what seemed to be a brazen furnace, that made our brains to seethe in our heads. The last fragments of biscuit eaten ravenously, and a strange, wild dreamy time coming on, during which I found that I was seated with Eve at my feet. How the hours passed at times, I know not; for in turn, I believe, during the hottest part of the day, many of us were delirious. The cool night, with its moist air, seemed to give some relief, but in the dim light of morning, I started on hearing a voice speaking loudly, for all had of late been silent, save when the mast creaked, as the boat rolled from side to side.

For a time I could not make out who spoke; but soon I recognized the voice as that of Mr. Stayman, talking of flowers and plants, and the bright-hued petals he fancied himself to be gathering—specimens of blossoms in some wondrous land where he was straying.

On fixing my swimming eyes upon him, I found he was lying back, with his eyes half-closed, but his hands were wandering busily about, clutching here and there, as if picking something, which he held to his nose and lips, and then made believe to lay down beside him, talking all the time. At last I found that the women had pressed up to where he

lay, and knelt there, weeping; save only Eve, who held tightly by one of my hands—for I had told myself that it was no time now to show resentment, and that now, near as we must be to our end, I could forgive her.

I can look back upon all this now with a feeling of bitterness—intense bitterness—and I ponder often upon my weakness and want of faith. But I had given way to suspicion at first, and it had dragged me down, lower and lower, till it had too great a hold upon me to be beaten off.

As the day wore on, Mr. Stayman grew more excited, and talked in louder tones of the land where he was travelling, and, listening to him, we forgot for the time being our intense sufferings from hunger and thirst. I do not know how long we continued without sustenance, for one day seemed blended with another, and neither Eve nor I could tell now how long that horrible time endured. There is a recollection only of a fevered throbbing pain, and white faces coming and going, of a blazing sea and sky, and half-blinded eyes trying to see ships coming to our rescue, now seeing them with white sails, coming nearer and nearer, and nearer, till all turned out to be delirium. Then, too, bright green islands seemed to be right in our path, so near that we could land at them in a few hours, to lie beneath the shade of waving trees, and drink great, cooling, copious draughts of gurgling, limpid water; but we came no nearer to the islands—they were but the creations of our disordered brains, and resolved soon into water—bright, blazing water.

There fell a strange awe upon us all, as the ravings of poor Mr. Stayman grew more and more wild. It seemed to rouse us from the state of stupor into which we had fallen, and to awaken us more fully to the terrible danger of our position. And still he talked on of the bright and glorious land—a land of rest, and pleasant groves, and streams, and flowers, such as we had dreamed of and pictured before us on the sea; and it was at times almost with feelings of envy that we dwelt upon his words.

It must have been towards evening, I think, that he suddenly started up, and held out his hand.

“Listen!” he said, in a strange, harsh, cracked voice. “There, again! How low and solemn!—who is it going for?”

I felt Eve tremble as she crept closer to my feet, and laid her hot head against my hands.

“Boom!” he cried—“there again, once in every minute. A heavy, massive bell; but how close—now again, and how faint and distant. Do you not hear it, all of you? Why don’t you speak? There, never mind; it has ceased. Flowers—flowers—bright and faded in an hour; but here’s water close at hand. Mr. Leslie! where is that poor child?”

Eve still retained my hand in one of hers; but she leaned over and touched Mr. Stayman with the other.

“Yes—yes—here’s water here—bright, bubbling water, and rest. Come, child—for you are but a child, and must still have the child’s love for flowers and green fields.”

“Mr. Leslie, sir! Mr. Graham! My God, you’re too late!” screamed Timkin.

For, before hand could be stretched forth to stay him, Mr. Stayman had stepped over the side, to disappear with hardly a splash into the dark blue water—for night was coming on fast; and though the boat-hook was seized, and oars were thrust out, we saw him no more, for he had gone to the land of the leal—to the land of rest and peace.

There was no outcry made, no shrieking from the ladies, but a strange feeling of solemnity seemed to come upon us all; for it was to us then as if we were standing upon the threshold, and that at any time the mysterious portal might be opened to one and all. For had a storm come on now, so overpowering was the feeling of lassitude and despair, that the boat might have drifted about at the mercy of the winds and the waves without an attempt being made to govern it.

Another day dawned, fierce and fiery; and now a wild fit of madness seemed to have seized upon the men. Timkin lay back, with one hand grasping the tiller, and for a long time had not moved; but when one of the sailors came aft, looking with red and wild eyes at Graham and me, he started up, and the man stood whispering to him.

"Wait till to-morrow," he said then, hoarsely; and then there was a short struggle, and the sailor was driven back, cursing and maddened; and then, as if directly, I knew that it was another day, and that neither Eve nor Mrs. Black had spoken lately, but that I was bending over my wife in an insane way, and from time to time lifting her eyelids to look into her dim eyes.

I remember too, that once those eyes were looking full in mine, and that there was a smile upon her lip, while my heart was even then whispering to me of what might have been.

Through the strange mist there seemed about us, I could see Graham too; and I watched him fiercely, lest he should approach, with the intention of seizing him and trying to force him away. But when at last he did lay his hand upon my shoulder, it was to shake me; and though he spoke, his words did not seem to have any sense or reason, till he dashed water upon my face, and then, feebly pressing me towards the side, leaned over and bathed my face again and again.

Then the mist seemed to clear away, and my feeling of hatred to return, as I looked again in his bold, fearless eyes.

"Do you see what they are doing?" he whispered, hoarsely, and he pointed towards the bows, where I could dimly make out the four sailors. "You must take your number with the others, or it will be a case of the weakest pushing for the stronger."

For a few moments I could not comprehend his meaning, but I saw it soon. Tenderly laying down the head that rested on my knees, I crawled with him forward to where Timkin and the three sailors knelt together, each man with a horrible guilty look upon his face. For I can recollect all that passed at this time clearly enough, since it was as though the intense horror of our position had awakened my faculties to greater activity, though my bodily strength failed each instant.

For a few minutes no one spoke, and then it was Timkin who broke the silence.

"I'm ready, gentlemen," he said, "if needs be; but they say it's to be all done fair, and I can do no more. I fought it back yesterday—day before—when was it? My head's going, gentlemen, and they say it's to be."

The faces that met my gaze will be painted indelibly on my brain till my dying day. I can see them now distinctly, as we huddled together under the blazing sun in the fore part of that boat—faces distorted by a look of horror that no words could adequately describe. And yet, clearly as I saw what was coming, I did not feel that I must shrink. My only thought was that the women were still holy in the eyes of those who were men.

I made no opposition, neither did Graham; while Timkin seemed to sink on a heap in the bottom of the boat, and did not move until all was over, one of the men lifting his arm, and closing his hand upon one of six pieces of line of unequal lengths, laid with their ends protruding from beneath a bit of matting.

"Draw according to age," said one man, hoarsely. And Timkin's fingers were made to close upon one of the pieces; then the sailors in turn drew; then I, and lastly, Graham.

He had watched with a wondrous eagerness as piece after piece was withdrawn; and when he looked upon mine my heart gave a great leap, for I saw the same smile that had half maddened me before come again upon his lip—a smile which brightened as, almost carelessly, he lifted his trembling hand, and took his piece, and then cast it down.

"Who is it?" said Timkin then, hoarsely.

No one answered; but as I looked I saw one of the sailors glare at me, his hand steal into his breast, and a knife come glittering out into the sunshine, when I turned my head to look where Eve lay, and my lips began to move in prayer.

"Not till night," I heard a voice cry, fiercely.

And then a hand pressed me back; till once more I was kneeling beside Eve, with her head in my lap, while Graham, with his hand upon my shoulder, was seated upon the thwarts.

"Not till night?" I said, as I looked him full in the face.

"No," he said, softly—"not till night."

Monsieur Mocquard's Hard Fate.

MEETING our friend Jean Mocquard a day or two since, limping along with his feet encased in a pair of large woollen overshoes, we said—

"Hallo, Jean! where have you been for the last month?"

"Ah, sare, one situation miserable have detain me to me house. Ze gout, ze gout! I am crucify all ze time wis dose two feet of me. I have, besides, trouble diabolique wis my landlady and my landlord, Madam Dobb and Mistair Dobb. If I drink somesing I suffer as do ze people of zer bad place. S'pose I not drink, Mistair Dobb he give to me fits. S'pose I take one drink, Madam Dobb she give to me fits. So you see I am place between what you call two fire. When ze big holiday arrive, Mistair Dobb become extremely elevate wis too numerous whisky-ponch. I go into me room and make of it

one fortification. Dobb he say to me, 'Come out and drink.' I says to him, 'My room is lock, is fortify. I no can drink.' I am afraid, you see, of Madam Dobb.

"Dobb he go away, and presently return and project through ze keyhole one straw of ze rye of ze wheat. I don't know, and he hello to me in one small voice zat I sall suck of ze same. I do so, and find one what you call mint of ze julip at ze outside end of ze straw.

"I have done all I can, I have fortify, but Dobb he invade me, so I suck of ze julip—I compromise wis ze enemy.

"Now, Madam Dobb she one ver' ingenious woman. She have perceive ze little julip entertainment from a distance. Presently one more straw project himself into ze keyhole. I suck him, and, by gar! what you sink? Salt watair, by gar! salt watair!

"Outside I hear Madam Dobb remark, 'Ho, ho, ho! he, he, he!'

"Ah, me friend, ze situation ver' distressful, I am constant between two fire—Dobb and Madam Dobb!"

Anecdote of a Dog.

A GENTLEMAN being on an excursion with his friend, and having a Newfoundland dog of the party, he soon became the subject of conversation; when the master, after a warm eulogium upon his perfections, assured his companion that he would, upon receiving the order, return and fetch any article he should leave behind, from any distance.

To confirm the assertion, a marked shilling was put under a large square stone by the side of the road, being first shown to the dog. The gentleman then rode for three miles, when the dog received his signal from the master to return for the shilling he had seen put under the stone. The dog turned back, the gentlemen rode on and reached home; but, to their surprise and disappointment, the hitherto faithful messenger did not return during the day.

It afterwards appeared that he had gone to the place where the shilling was deposited, but, the stone being too heavy for his strength to remove, he had stayed howling at the place till two horsemen riding by, and attracted by his seeming distress, stopped to look at him; when one of them, alighting, removed the stone, and, seeing the shilling, put it into his pocket, not at the time conceiving it to be the object of the dog's search.

The dog followed their horses for twenty miles, remained undisturbed in the room where they supped, followed the chambermaid into the bed-chamber, and secreted himself under one of the beds. The possessor of the shilling hung his trousers upon a nail by the bedside; but when the travellers were both asleep the dog took them in his mouth, and, leaping out of the window, which had been left open on account of the sultry heat, reached the house of his master at four o'clock in the morning, with the prize he had made free with; in the pockets of which were found a watch

and money, that were returned upon being advertised, when the whole mystery was mutually unravelled, to the admiration of all parties.

Things New and Old.

A LITTLE boy the other day requested to be taken to see the Lapps at the Aquarium.

"What for?" inquired mamma.

"Betoth I could yike to tit in 'em," was the reply.

Somebody wants to know what the surplus plant is like, for he is always seeing it advertised for sale by auction, and very often in the Isle of Dogs. Does it grow there, and, if so, when does it blossom?

Let this be a comfort to travellers:—

M. Gartiaux has published some curious statistics on the dangers of travelling by land. He says that in the old diligence days a man had one chance of being killed in 300,000 trips, and one chance of being injured in 30,000. On the railway between 1835 and 1855 there was one chance of being killed in 2,000,000 journeys, and one chance of being injured in 500,000. From 1855 to 1875 one chance of being killed in making 6,000,000 journeys, and one chance of being injured in 600,000. Now the chances of being killed are as one to 45,000,000, and of being injured one to 1,000,000. Consequently, a person travelling ten hours a day at the rate of forty miles an hour would in the first period have had a chance of escaping destruction during 321 years; during the second period during 1,014 years, and between 1872 and 1875 during 7,439 years.

According to the "Man About Town," there has just been established in Paris "An Insurance Company against Female Celibacy," and there are to be branches at all the European capitals. I don't know how the insurance is to be effected, unless the company undertakes to provide every young woman with a substantial *dot*, and even then they might not attract the cynical, selfish, club-frequenting young bachelors of the period. Perhaps if they were all guaranteed to be excellent cooks, their marriageable value might be raised, for a good many men nowadays are only to be reached through their stomachs, and, like the Turk whom Captain Burnaby tells us of in his last book, they think cookery a higher recommendation than beauty. The late M. Thiers, it is said, was very proud of the culinary and housewifely virtues of Madame Thiers, of whom the following anecdote is told to her credit:—A few years ago Madame Thiers was in the high position now occupied by Madame MacMahon. Some friend shot a buck and sent it to the President, and was invited to dinner, to take part of the first haunch cut from the animal. He was seated next Madame Thiers, who said to him—

"I want to ask you a question."

"At your orders, madame."

"Can you tell me how many joints there are in a head of venison?"

"*Ma foi*, madame, I am only a sportsman; not a cook."

"It is a pity, as I wanted to know particularly."

"Why, madame?"

"Ah, Monsieur le Comte, because servants are such thieves, and I have to watch them carefully!"

The fashion nowadays seems to me to make poems, or *chansons*, as they are frequently called, out of as few words as possible, repeating the lines again and again. Here is one that is worthy of Mr. Austin Dobson—

FOR MUSIC.

Of what are you thinking? Oh, say then—oh, say then.

Of what are you thinking? Oh, say.

Of what are you thinking? Oh, say then—oh, say then!

Of what are you thinking? Oh, say.

Of what are you thinking to-day, then—to-day, then?

Of what are you thinking to-day?

Of what are you thinking to-day, then—to-day, then?

Of what are you thinking to-day?

Of what are you thinking, I pray, then—I pray, then?

Of what are you thinking, I pray?

Of what are you thinking, I pray, then—I pray, then?

Of what are you thinking, I pray?

Encore verses could be supplied *ad infinitum*.

Here is a story of Von Wrangel, just received:—

The General was a native of Stettin, where in 1848 his family lived. Simultaneously with the troubles in Berlin occurred also an outbreak in Stettin; the populace seized, among other hostages for Wrangel's good conduct here, his own wife, and notified him that if he entered the capital with his troops they would shoot her. This threat had no effect on the rough old fellow. At the appointed time he rode through the Brandenburg gate at the head of his soldiers, and down Unter den Linden to the scene of trouble. His work was done without hesitation, and even with enthusiasm, and no one dared to remind him of his imperilled spouse. Some days afterwards the news came that the threat had not been executed, and that the tender hostage had been released. Then a staff officer asked Wrangel if he had not been anxious for his wife as he rode through the Brandenburg gate.

"No—oh, no," said the General, "I never had any confidence in those Stettin people!"

This is one instance of Wrangel's Spartan fortitude.

A person designated as "a poet" recently died, whereupon a youthful editor discoursed thus:—

"Young in years, but old in achievement, he has left for himself a niche in the temple of fame, over which we now see hovering for an instant his spirit, a rainbow formed by the light of genius shining through the waters of truth."

Two or three weeks since a little girl of some five summers desired to serve a vegetable which stood before her on a public table.

"May I give you some?" she asked, turning to a lady near.

The lady, who was an invalid, smilingly replied—

"No, dear; my mamma doesn't allow me any."

"Then, said the child, "I will help somebody who has no mamma."

"England," says the *Temps*, "is a vast manufactory, a great laboratory, a universal counting-house. France is a rich farm, tending to turn itself into a manufactory. Germany is an ill-cultivated field, because they are philosophers and not peasants who till it. Southern Italy is a villa in ruins. Northern Italy is an artificial prairie. Belgium is a forge. Holland is a canal. Sweden and Denmark are carpenters' yards. Poland is a sandy heath. Russia is an ice-house. Switzerland is a chalet. Greece is a field in a state of nature. Turkey is a field fallow. India is a gold mine. Egypt is a workshop for apprentices. Africa is a furnace. Algiers is a nursery-ground. Asia is a grove. The Antilles are sugar refineries. South America is a store."

"Which is the largest gland?" asked a medical professor of the newest arrival in his class the other day. The student buried himself in deep and attentive thought for a moment, and then brightened up suddenly, and exclaimed—

"The largest gland, sir, is England."

Then the professor kindly led the youth aside, and pathetically advised him to think no more of medicine, but join a minstrel show or enter the army.

"I meant to have told you of that hole," said a gentleman to his friend, who, walking in his garden, stumbled into a pit of water.

"No matter," said the friend, "I have found it."

"I wish I were you for about two hours," she said with great tenderness.

"And why, my dear?" asked the husband, with considerable interest.

"Because," she said, toying affectionately with his watch chain, "because then I would buy my wife a new set of furs."

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyl-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

The Egotist's Note-Book.

HERE is one of the "Man about Town's" stories:—

Talking of old age, a friend of mine who is not exactly a young man—as, indeed, the anecdote I am about to relate will show—has an old coachman who is a character in his way, and who has been so long in his present master's service that he is a privileged person, and has that extension of tolerance granted to him which is the monopoly of old and valued and faithful servants. I called upon my venerable friend the other day, and at the door I met the old coachman, who, in reply to a question of mine, said—

"Master's been ill, sir. He's all right again now; but he must have been precious bad, or he'd never have had a doctor to see him. But, lor' bless you, sir, doctors couldn't kill *him*."

"No; so it appears," I replied.

"No," repeated the coachman, "not they. Bless you, sir, he's a wonderful man. He tells people he's only ninety-five; but between you and me, I believe he's a *centurion*."

There, Mr. Thoms, if you have not given up your crusade against "centurions" in despair, there is a case for the exercise of your zealous incredulity.

I hope the people enjoyed themselves at Horace Wigan's benefit! It was too late for me. It is bad enough to stop till twelve o'clock at a theatre, and then get home; and as H. W.'s benefit was announced to commence at *one o'clock* in the morning, I did not go, though many people did. If it really did begin at one o'clock, it could not have been over till five in the morning, and the people must have gone home with the milk.

"What's in a name?" A good deal, seemingly; for really it is strange how curiously names get together, or are associated with a trade. Time back, Flint and Steel used to be shoemakers in Holborn; Ridley and Latimer in Bishopsgate-street—perhaps they are there now; while only the other day Mr. Fardell, a carrier, was summoned to Guildhall to answer for refusing to bear the impost of rates imposed upon him. He very sensibly declined to pay the insolent charge made upon him by the overseers; for, because he occupied the ground floor of a house let out in portions, he was charged with the whole rate of the house, the other parts being empty. Of course, the case was dismissed. But Fardell a carrier! Does not Shakspeare say, "Who would fardels bear?"

Publicans are being fined for adulterating their beer, and the excise are growing busy over making discoveries. Just as if there were anything to discover; since it is well known that almost without exception the licensed victuallers do adulterate, as it is called, the ale and porter they vend. It is a very harmless process though, and one that hardly deserves notice, since all they do is to add salt and sugar or treacle, to make the draught more palatable—which it really does—and a certain quantity

of water to balance the expense of the addition. Of course the excise know best; but so long as a publican does nothing worse than the above, or the addition of a little copperas to make his liquor head well, beer-loving Britons will not have much of which to complain. There seems to me to be more room for interfering with the grocers than with those who water their beer and gin.

One of the last spirits called up in America is that of Heenan, the pugilist—a gentle ghost, who threateningly shook his fist, and hit out, saying, "If any man don't believe, let him speak out." Why, it was enough to force belief. I fancy I should give credence to the reality of any spirit who threatened to punch my head.

The garotter is not dead yet. Only the other evening, as a friend was about to use his latch-key and enter his house, a woman appealed to him for alms, taking up his attention so that a powerful scoundrel was enabled to throw an arm round his neck, half strangle him, and hold him helpless while the woman helped herself to a gold watch and part of the chain, their victim being afterwards dashed down, and left half stunned and confused, while his aggressors made their escape.

Mr. Tooth has bitten Lord Penzance very sharply. In the judgment which the latter pronounced in the case of "*Hudson v. Tooth*," he was careful to point out that the Court of Arches, in which he sat, was no secular court; and that, if it were a secular or temporal court, it was no novelty for such tribunals to interfere in ecclesiastical disputes. Mr. Tooth took to heart these observations; he made an application to the Queen's Bench Division; and the result is that this secular court consented to issue a writ of prohibition to Lord Penzance, interdicting him from proceeding further with respect to Mr. Tooth's case, on the ground that the Court of Arches had no jurisdiction.

A friend assures me that the game of Pink Dominoes is one of the best he knows for whiling away an evening. One old lady of his acquaintance has been to see it five times, and means to go again. There is no accounting for taste.

The members for Deal have been down amongst their constituents, and half a column of small type is accorded to Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen; while as to Mr. Brassey, all that is said is, "Mr. Brassey, M.P., also addressed the meeting." Now this is rather hard on a gentleman who can wind himself up, and go on talk, talk, talk, for hours, though it is not very pleasant to sit and hear him for more than half a minute.

"I say, Brown, is it true that you have quarrelled with Jones?"

"I haven't quarrelled with him, but we've parted."

"How's that?"

"Why, you see, Jones was so unreasonable. You know my rooms are very small, and he went and got so fat that I couldn't move for him."

Chaff and Wheat.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"COME on!" shouted Frank, as, with Stephen at his elbow, he charged down upon three men who stood right in the road to dispute the way.

"Stop!" roared one of the fellows with an oath, and then rolled over with the blow he received from the short staff which Frank had handled with great precision. At the same moment, Stephen made right and left cuts at the other two, but aiming at too much, hit nothing—receiving, however, a nasty crack himself as the men parted to let him through; which was a very sensible act on their part, since he charged down something after the fashion of a young bull.

A sharp run would now have taken two of the party out of danger; for, like all country-bred young men, they could use their legs. But Tom Phipps had to be considered; and, like some of the horses in that day's race, he was "nowhere." But, in spite of such a case of no *locus standi*, he was shouting lustily for help.

"Come on back, Frank," hissed Stephen between his teeth, for the blow he had received made him savage.

And then the pair rushed back to the aid of Tom, just as that gentleman, with a desperate blow of the flail, temporarily rid himself of an enemy—one of the men by whom Stephen had passed. This blow, however, was afterwards owned by Tom to have been "a fluke."

But Tom's success was only short-lived, for before his enemy had well fallen, the man from the beer-shop came behind the hero of the flail, and, with one well-directed blow upon the ear, sent him staggering up against the bank.

There was, therefore, one man literally thrashed and lying motionless in the road; but the fellow Frank had sent over was now up again, and a desperate encounter took place between the three men and the two schoolfellows. The attacking party were armed with hedgestakes, and seemed bent upon mischief; but there was no time allowed for thought, and in the *mêlée* which ensued blow succeeded blow with far more rapidity than effect. Still, some nasty exchanges took place; and, in spite of Stephen's strength, it would have gone hard with them if, in the midst of the struggle, Tom had not somewhat recovered himself, and then, with a shriek of fury, rushed with doubled fists at the first enemy that presented himself, and punched and pummelled away with no mean display of skill. Tom closed with the fellow at once, and well made up for his want of size by activity, giving his opponent enough to do to take care of himself, for he had broken his stick. But in the rounds which followed, poor Tom was at a great disadvantage from being dizzy with the first blow he had received; and, to quote the language of our respected sporting friend, the correspondent of *Beaux Life*, he was "heavily pressed" twice over; the second time his adversary coolly sitting upon the gallant little fellow's chest, to keep him down and recover breath.

Early in the struggle Frank received an ugly blow

across the head, which made the blood spurt out swiftly; but he fought on manfully, with the warm stream trickling down his face, till, in making a blow at his enemy, his staff slipped from his hand, and he stood almost at his opponent's mercy.

The fellow was well aware of his chance, and aimed a blow at Frank which would have rendered him *hors de combat*; but, with a bound, the unarmed man avoided the blow, darted within the fellow's guard, and then, in strict accordance with the noble art of self-defence, as taught by professors at Cambridge, Frank gave the scoundrel such a fistic crack in the mouth as made him drop his stick and shake his head. This blow was so vigorously followed up, that Frank's enemy soon began to back, and a last left-handed crack upon the nose seemed to yield so little satisfaction that he turned and fled.

Just then Frank kicked against one of the sticks, and, picking it up, turned to see whom he could best aid. Stephen was engaged with an enemy, locked in a tight embrace, both using nature's weapons, and the former, from size and strength, evidently the better man; while the fellow whom Tom had in the first instance thrashed was just getting upon his legs, evidently with the intention of wiping out his disgrace.

But Frank's blood was now up—what there was left of it—and with one cut he sent the fellow reeling backwards, quite disabled from further interference that night. He then turned his attention to Tom, who was some thirty yards off, lying upon his back, as already described. To rush forward to his assistance was but the work of an instant; and seeing the state of affairs, Tom's enemy would have left him and fled. But Tom, though down, was not beaten—he was only thoroughly spiteful; and when the fellow tried to rise, he hung on to him like a bull-dog, till Frank's stick came down "thud" upon the man's head.

Once more at liberty to turn his aid into another channel, Frank looked towards Stephen, who was still hard at work in a close struggle with his foe; and now for an instant an unaccountable something seemed to hold Frank back, and it required an effort of mind to conquer it. It is hard to say why, but in those brief moments the thought of the day's proceedings, and Madeline's suffused face on the race-course, came upon him—then the struggle in the wood, and then the rescue from the pool; but before that recollection was half formed, Frank had conquered his weakness, and dashed at the remaining enemy.

But the fellow did not wait; for seeing another coming to the attack—to use Tom Phipps's expressive term when relating the story—he immediately "shunted."

Fortunately, there was no more fighting required, for Tom was about done up, and leaning against the sandy bank dabbling his bleeding nose; while, forgetful of all other considerations, Frank and Stephen were having a quiet shake of the hand together. But Tom soon began to shuffle himself into shape again; spat out a mouthful of blood, and then, coming from out of the shade into the middle of the road, he set up a most hideous yell, but, withal, not

such a bad imitation of the champion bird of the male gender known by the same sportive appellation as pheasants and partridges.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo-o-o—ah-h-h!" cried Tom, but ending in such a dismal groan that, in spite of his own smarts, Stephen Vaughan burst into a hearty laugh.

His mirth, however, was but of short duration; for just then, as though struck by a stone from some mighty sling of old, Frank Henderson went down without even a warning struggle or reel, and lay motionless upon the muddy road.

Fortunately, they were not far from water; and between them, but with many a groan, Tom and Stephen managed to half carry, half drag, the poor fellow to the brook edge, where, after having his face bathed for awhile, he somewhat revived; when, fearing another attack, the three friends set off upon their homeward journey—slowly, painfully, and making but slow progress, for at times Frank could scarcely keep his feet.

"Well, sir," said Tom, in conclusion, "we got here, but how we managed it, I can't tell; and I'll never believe but what it is twice as far as they say—and that's all."

"Here—hold him!" shouted the Squire; "he's light-headed—he's mad! He must have had a blow that has injured his brain."

And well might the Squire shout, and the ladies feel disposed to creep together, for upon finishing his narrative, Tom leaped upon a chair, crying out, "Hurray! we beat them!" He then hopped upon the arm of the sofa, where, balancing himself for a moment or two, he clapped his hands against his sides, and again yelled forth—

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

"Oh," said the squire, subsiding, "that's all, is it? And there—we've never given information to the policeman!"

CHAPTER XXV.—CHRISTMAS.

MATTERS were now progressing in a terribly uninteresting manner. Madeline and Frank enjoyed themselves as young folks in their condition generally do—that is to say, in the most selfish way imaginable. In spite of Mrs. Vaughan's sighs, matters would not shape themselves as she wished; and it was considered that Stephen Vaughan was paying his addresses to the curate's sister, but in a very hot-and-cold fashion. The curate himself was—like Stephen, who, again, was like Tom Phipps—uncomfortable, and given to sighing. Frank was to be married shortly, so 'twas said; and hints were thrown out respecting the house he would occupy; but Alice—now about the most careless and indifferent of the actors on this little stage—Alice said it was all nonsense, and she did not believe the wedding would come off for some time; and Alice must have had some authority for being so positive.

So much interest had been taken in mating matters, that Squire Vaughan had been almost alone in noticing how the time had passed away; and over his pipe and flagon he recalled how the golden harvest time glided swiftly by, when his waving corn-fields had been invaded by troops of labourers, and

the shining sickle had laid the rustling ears in long rows of sheaves. Loudly had the wain groaned beneath the life-sustaining burden; but the prime interest of the season had been the harvest party, held after the men had had their bounteous supper, and enjoyed themselves as harvest men do—ate and drank till they could eat and drink no more. And now, almost before it could be believed, the chill rains had led in winter, with its bitter storms. The great pond was frozen hard, and bush and spray glittered with the frozen breath of the harsh monarch. The pointed gables of the old Hall were softened in their outline by the heavy fall of snow which clung to them, and bent down the broad and spreading cedars till the branches touched the ground. Wheels of passing vehicles rolled silently by upon the thick white carpet; while—morning, noon, and night—the keen air told of many degrees of frost.

It was true Christmas weather, and the Squire walked about, chuckling, rubbing his hands, and thinking of the coming festivity. He praised old English customs, and loved to keep them up too.

Then invites were sent to the Reverend Augustus and his sister, but were accepted only in the latter instance; while, as a matter of course, Tom Phipps came.

The old oak dining-room used to be turned into a regular holly copse, glistening with red berries; and upon this occasion, after the decoration of the church by the same hands, had been ornamented by the maidens whose names so often occur here. As to the great mistletoe branch that hung from the centre, it was one mass of pearly berries, every berry the representative of a Christmas kiss; and it alone was hung up in triumph by the Squire himself, all the while aided, abetted, and protected by a body-guard, consisting of Frank, Stephen, and Tom Phipps.

And there stood the Squire, with boots all snowy, and nose and face glowing and red, up on the top of the short steps, trying to reach the hook in the great oak beam; while Alice, Annie Newman, and Madeline, supported by a light brigade of young cousins, who had dispersed the body-guard, were tugging at the old gentleman's skirts, and trying to shake him from his perch.

Christmas morning—just as it should be, with earth in her brightest winter robes, and every bough and spray adorned with nature's fairest gems. Bright shone the sun, and blue was the sky, while there was a cutting, freezing breeze scudding over the earth, that sent the blood coursing and tingling through the veins, and made the cheek to glow beneath the brightened eye. There was a regular beaten track through the deep snow up to the Hall, while early in the morning, before it was so deeply marked, Frank Henderson added his footsteps, so as to be ready for breakfast and the walk afterwards to church. The Hall could make a display of bedrooms when there was occasion, and, from the number of staying visitors, there must have been a mighty sheet-airing going on for a week before. Alice had carried the day, so that Madeline and Annie Newman were both guests for the time, besides the brigade of cousins; and it was a sight worth seeing

that morning, when they all assembled to accompany the Squire to church; for Mrs. Vaughan could not leave home upon a Christmas Day—a day when the old gentleman was most exacting as to the dinner being done to a turn, while the servants seemed worse than ever.

But here have we been keeping the old gentleman and the bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked bevy of maidens waiting in the cold, with their attendant satellites ready to bow down and worship to the end of their lives. And no wonder; for such faces surely ne'er were seen—their owners muffed, furred, and made ten times more killing by having their charms masked with those torturing little veils. As for blonde Alice, it was sinful to allow her near the church; such a bright-eyed, sunny-curled fairy as she looked—a fairy modernized, and wearing a dreadfully killing little turban hat, tastefully ornamented with a white wing; her *svelte* form shown off in a tight jacket, and her hands hidden in a grebe muff. Fast Tom Phipps dared not go near her, but paired off with a very girlish cousin. Annie Newman completely spoiled her brother's delivery when she entered the church that morning, so far opposite was she in her costume to that affected by a Sister of Mercy. And Madeline—but there really is not time to write a long description of the ladies' dress, for they are all marshalling themselves into order or disorder, and, followed or accompanied by the gentlemen who are made book-bearers, are passing down the avenue towards the church.

But one thing must be chronicled here, and that is, that in spite of the lapse of time, and the application of its anodyne, Stephen Vaughan's wound must still have been painful, from the glances—envious glances—he kept casting towards the part of the procession occupied by the Rector's daughter, generally, however, resting his eyes by turning them towards the curate's sister, and directly after giving a startled look to see if Alice was watching.

The Hall pew filled, ran over into a smaller pew on either side, and then trickled down the chancel in a stream which terminated in Tom Phipps and the girlish cousin. And very cold it was in the little old church; but then hearts were warm enough, and no one seemed to be suffering much when the Rector finished his sermon, and Madeline played the good folk out. The Hall party filed off last along the snowy path, greatly strengthened, for the Rector joined now, with Mr. and Mrs. Deedes, and Mr. Childe; and lastly, trying to look very agreeable, but making a failure of it, Sampson Elton, Esq.—as he was called in the directory—escorting his dame. But, however he might afterwards have relented, there was no Rev. Augustus Newman, for he dined in cold state before a very small fire in his own room, with Miss Cinques' cat for company, and grieved during the remainder of the day for the worldliness of his sister and his superior in the church.

"Safe? Yes," cried the Squire; "that chimney will stand anything. Clap on another log!"

And another log was clapped on, and the fire roared and sparkled, and flamed up the chimney, till the windows, the plate and glass upon the table, the wine

upon the sideboard, and the eyes of those assembled glowed again.

Bustle and hurry, and hurry and bustle, and then in came the dinner.

"No fashion to-day," said the old gentleman, "but English fare!"

And fare it was.

Sirloin, turkey, cheek and chine, capon and goose; humming home-brewed ale, and a rare glass of port and sherry—wine which sparkled in the decanters like living gems, as the table quivered beneath the weight of the goodly cheer.

"A merry Christmas to all!" was the Squire's grace.

"In the name of the Giver of all, amen," said the Rector.

Then followed feasting; and, in good time, the holly-crowned pudding in a blazing sea of brandy, which flickered and danced in waves of light, while at the Squire's end rose a goodly stack of mince-pies.

Evening closing in, and the red curtains drawn, lamp and candle, blazing fire, and the dessert shining again in the depths of the dark mahogany.

Night, and reports circulated of the keen, fierce frost outside; the wind roaring in the chimney; song and tale; forfeits, dancing, and blind-man's-buff, with the Squire blindfold. Then the mistletoe brought into requisition, and the berries totally forgotten, until a maiden voice exclaimed against the salutes, declaring that the stock of glistening pearls should have been exhausted an hour before.

The Yule log which had been drying for months was blazing and crackling away, for the fire had eaten deeply into one side, and that side sent a golden glow through the room; then the piano was dragged into the centre, and a half circle formed round the fire; the old fogies routed out of their corner, where they had been enjoying their whist; and then a table was placed, upon which there soon appeared three portly china bowls—punch in the centre, negus on one flank, and on the other some tremendous ancient beverage, with red-hot roasted apples plunged cissing and sputtering therein, to bob about and send forth a most enticing odour—a regular forest of tall-stemmed glasses clustered round; and then to work went Alice with the ladle, Tom Phipps playing Ganymede, till all the party were supplied.

"Now then!" cried Stephen, after the toast of "A merry Christmas to all" had been duly honoured, "silence for a song."

A silence ensued, for all knew the custom of the place, and, as he had for many years past, Squire Vaughan trolled out his only song, "Winter's Coming," though to all present he seemed already there.

Plenty of applause followed the Squire's song; much of which was, however, drowned by Alice thumping away at the first bars of another air.

"Now, Stevey, bashful brother, get yours done, and then I can go and sit down," she exclaimed.

"But 'Stevey, bashful brother,' seemed in no hurry to get his done, and he would have backed out of it altogether if he had had the opportunity; but no such chance was afforded him, for Alice kept

on thump, thump, at the opening note, till, in sheer despair, he roared out—

"I had a dream upon a Christmas night."

"Bravo—bravo—encore—encore; a-tchishew—a-tchishew—er-er-er a-tchishew!" cried Tom Phipps, as he sat nearest the door. "Why, what a smoke!"

"Eh? what? Smoke? So there is. Just see what they're burning, Steve, will you?" said the Squire, ladling away at the punch, to the neglect of "the amber stream."

Stephen Vaughan was back in a moment, and beckoned out his father and Frank.

"Well—what is it?" cried the old gentleman hurriedly, and apparently startled by his son's pale face.

"Hush!" whispered Stephen, closing the door hastily, for his father had left it open; then speaking in a low husky voice—"Hush! The house is on fire!"

CHAPTER XXVI.—A FIERY ORDEAL.

"**HUSH!** The house is on fire!" said Stephen Vaughan; and, as he spoke, the fire bore witness to the truth of his words, for there was a low smothered crackling to be heard, and a stifling smoke crept slowly down the broad staircase into the hall. "Good God! where?" ejaculated the Squire, in a piteous voice.

"Upstairs," cried Stephen; "the chimney must have been overheated, and Alice's bed-room is in a blaze."

The old gentleman gave a groan, and covered his face with his hands.

"My poor old home!" he muttered; but the next instant he was himself again.

"Let's see what progress it has made," whispered Frank. "Don't let them know in the room, yet. There's no danger there, at present. Come on."

And he dashed up the staircase and into the thick of the smoke.

The Squire and Stephen hurried up after him, and in a few moments they stood where the dense smoke was pouring out beneath one of the passage doors—a door which led to the rooms occupied by Alice, Madeline, and two of the cousins.

Frank opened the passage door, and the rush of heated smoke beat him back; but he dashed forward again, and closed the portal, but not so quickly but that he could see a dull glow shining beneath the right-hand door, while the crackling grew louder and louder.

Just then the Squire rushed forward, and would have again thrown the door open; but Frank and Stephen held him back.

"That would make matters worse, sir," exclaimed the former. "Be calm, and no doubt we can make all right yet."

"For God's sake go on, then," groaned the Squire. "The poor old house! It will be down at last."

"Not this time," cried Frank. "Now come with me. You, Steve, round to the back, and get all the help you can, and a ladder and buckets. If I'm not there, have the ladder raised, and then form a line of men to the pond; and don't break in the window."

Stephen rushed off, while Frank and the Squire

hurried down into the dining-room, where all was now alarm, for the smoke had filled the place, and the party had risen from their seats.

In a few brief sentences, Frank stated what was the matter, and begged of the ladies not to be alarmed, but to keep at one end of the house until there was sufficient danger to warrant their leaving; when, as a matter of course, this had the desired effect, for directly he had ceased speaking, some began to scream, some to faint, one or two to try and get out of the window, and altogether there was such a scene as quite disgusted Frank, who then set about enlisting all the able-bodied men.

"Glasses round, first," cried Tom Phipps, helping himself to a ladle of punch; and then, apparently emboldened by the spirit, he got round to the side of Alice, squeezed her hand, and whispered, "Don't be frightened, dear!"

And then, not knowing what effect such words might have, he hurriedly followed Frank out to the back of the house, where they could see the red glow from the window making a long track of light out upon the darkness. Directly after, several men came up, and a couple of ladders were raised, one on either side of the window; while buckets were brought, and a line of men formed down to the ice-covered pond, where Stephen was already hard at work breaking a hole.

There was no lack of help, for the labourers came running up, and the Squire, now somewhat recovered from the shock, was soon busily forming a second row of men to pass back the empty buckets to the dipping-man at the pond edge.

"Now, then," cried Frank, "pass up quickly," as, twisting one of his legs through the spokes of the ladder, he leaned forward, and dashed the empty bucket he held in his hand again and again through the window.

Out gushed the flame, sending him back half blinded and scorched with the fervent heat; but the half-suppressed shriek from below nerved him again, and, knowing full well that the fate of the Hall was sealed if he shrank from his task, he seized the first full bucket that was brought up, and dashed in the contents, passed the empty vessel over to the other ladder by stooping beneath the flames, and then, seizing another and another from beneath as they were handed up, he kept on dashing in the water with untiring arm; but apparently with little effect, beyond making the place vomit clouds of steam, which came hissing forth, mingled with the smoke and flame.

It soon became evident that the fire had got a very serious hold, and in more than one breast there was a feeling of despair arising—fear that the fine old hospitable building must come down; but all this was well concealed, and every man worked as though his life depended upon his exertions.

"Never mind the furniture!" shouted the Squire. "Every man stick to the buckets. Bravo! Frank, my lad—in with them. That was a good one, boy. Far in as you can. Keep 'em to the water, Steve. No stopping. Well done. We'll win. Phipps! Tom Phipps! Where's Tom Phipps?"

"Here we are!" shouted Tom, who was drenched to the skin with water.

"Let's have some beer here, Tom," cried the Squire.

Tom ran off, and soon after re-appeared with a large canful of the refreshing beverage, which he proceeded to administer to all around.

It was gratifying to the lookers-on to see that at last the bed-room began to wear a blacker hue; but there was still a great body of flame in the place, which, in spite of all his efforts, Frank could not reach, except by making the water splash or rebound from the wall. But now there was a new danger presenting itself, for the fire had eaten its way through into the attic above, where a dull, flickering light could be seen, while smoke began to pour out of the window.

"We can do no more good here," cried Frank; "we must tackle it from inside."

"But you'll never bear the smoke," groaned the Squire, in despair.

"We must bear the smoke," cried Frank, "or else down comes the place."

"Help! help!" shrieked a voice just at that moment; and one of the girls came running from the kitchen door.

"What's the matter?" roared the Squire.

"Oh, sir!" cried the girl, "Miss Alice—Miss Glebeley—upstairs."

"Why, they were here just now," exclaimed the old gentleman.

But they were not there then, for a short time previously Alice had remembered that, before the games began that evening, several of her friends went upstairs, and left in Madeline's room their watches and breakable ornaments; and, in company with the girl, she ran up with Madeline to try and save them.

By going up the back-stairs they had no great difficulty in approaching the room; but, as they neared the door, the smoke grew so dense that the girl clung to them, and tried to stop their further progress. But Alice cried to Madeline to come on, and, catching hold of her hand, she ran through the smoke, opened the door, and, as they disappeared from the girl's sight, the flames burst from the door of Alice's room, lower down the passage, so that escape seemed regularly cut off, and the girl ran shrieking downstairs again.

Frank dashed down his bucket and rushed up to the passage, followed by Tom Phipps and Stephen; but the smoke was so stifling, and accompanied by such a rush of flame, that they were beaten back. But they made another attempt, reached the door, ran in, and as Tom banged it to after him, Frank fell on the floor half suffocated, while Stephen staggered across the room and dashed his hands through the window, thus letting in a burst of refreshing air.

But Frank had found the air more life-sustaining down by the floor, and, recovering himself, he began to search about in the darkness for the unfortunate girls, all the while feeling a painful sense of sinking at the heart. In another instant he came in contact with Stephen, who had just thrown the window widely open; but on separating again, Stephen set up a joyful cry, and bore a figure to the open window. Frank then stumbled towards where he heard

the cry, and reached the spot where some one else was lying, and he lifted and bore her to the window to find that it was Alice.

The poor girls were quite insensible, and remained so even after the shouts of Stephen had brought help and a ladder to the spot, when even at such a time Frank could not help feeling maddened to see his betrothed held by Stephen, and gnawed his lips to think he should not have saved her himself.

But there was not time for further thought. Stephen bore fainting Madeline down the ladder, and Frank and Tom quickly followed with Alice, when they were delivered up to the ladies who flocked round, while the young men again began to battle with the flames, which had been gaining ground somewhat during this incident, though under the Squire's direction the men had been working hard again the moment it was seen that Alice and Madeline were safe.

"Now for inside," cried Frank. "Bring that ladder here, and let them fetch the one round from the other side of the house. Pass up the buckets quickly."

And then he hurried up the ladder to the back attic window, dashed in a pane, and unfastened it so that he could crawl in and reach the top passage.

The heat and smoke were overpowering, but by throwing open doors and windows, and a trap in the little passage, the place became more bearable. The draught was, of course, most dangerous, but the place could not have been borne without; and now, from the eager aid rendered, Frank found himself in a position to attack the fire on this side. Collecting eight men together with buckets, he stood now by the door of the burning attic.

"Crackle, sputter, crackle," came with dull and deadly sound from behind the frail door, while the stifling vapour almost overpowered them.

"Now, then, stand by me, Steve," said Frank, huskily; "and when I throw the door open, pass the pails quickly."

Then, with one dash, he sent the door off its hinges, so that it fell right over a large hole eaten by the fire through the floor, checking the rising flames for a few minutes, and enabling Frank to dash out the fire that was around.

The current of air bore off the steam and smoke; and, armed with fresh pails of water, the two young men stood on either side of the fallen door, while one of the labourers drew it on one side; and then, as they gazed down a fiery well-like opening into the room beneath, they dashed down the water, pailful after pailful, with tremendous effect, upon the burning mass.

One of the men now rushed across the attic, kicked out the whole of the lattice, and pushed up a trap door in the roof, so that the steam and smoke rushed out in volumes. Up came the water, pailful after pailful; and at last they were able to economize its use more, and direct it into corners and parts where it would be of the most avail. The men found that they could get at the fire up the great staircase, and pailful after pailful of water was carried in that way; while the Rector rubbed his

hands gleefully for his forethought in slaking out the dining-room fire, whose overheated chimney had caused all the mischief.

And now the blackened room, sending out its clouds of smoke and steam, told that all the danger was past, for wherever a spark was seen there were two or three pails of water ready to extinguish it; while even Frank, after a last tour of inspection, consented to say that the place was safe.

It was well, though, that the men stood their ground when the attic door was dashed in. But for this, the draught made would, in a few minutes, have ensured the spread of the flames beyond remedy, for they had obtained a great hold, as shown by the charred timbers; and it was only after once more having the room most thoroughly drenched, and nearly choking himself in the pungent vapour, that the Squire would consent to leave the dreary spot and take some refreshment.

But there were others, too, who needed rest and a time of refreshing. Drenched, pale, haggard, with singed hair and smoke-grimed face, Frank looked completely exhausted; while there were not many in a better plight.

It was now midnight; but there was still a comfortable fire in the drawing-room, where, after a due amount of changing, the Squire assembled the residue of his guests, Frank having sent home for a change of raiment. A fresh bowl of punch was brewed, and over his glass the old gentleman gave Frank a squeeze of the hand, more expressive than a quarter of an hour's speech, and then tried to revive the drooping spirits of the party.

But the Squire's efforts were in vain, in spite of the assistance which he received from Tom Phipps; for the scene of the last hour or two had completely unnerved the lady portion of the assembly; while as for the gentlemen, they were, as Tom said, "completely knocked up."

Then, too, Frank felt vexed and ungrateful, and not at all obliged to his old schoolfellow for saving Madeline; in fact, he thought it quite a liberty. And Stephen, somehow, could not help feeling as though he would have been more at rest within himself if he had had the fortune to stumble against his sister in the dark smoke instead of the Rector's daughter. While, as to the ladies, Madeline pondered long and seriously about the affair, and wondered what Frank thought; and Alice—well, she drank the glass of punch Mrs. Vaughan took up, unknown to the doctor, and then went fast asleep, and dreamed that she went out to a party in a wreath of mistletoe, to the very great disgust of Tom Phipps, who shut her up in a smoky room, for punishment, till Frank let her out.

But there was no more cheerfulness downstairs; and, after a watch had been set, and sundry precautions taken for excluding the night air, the inmates of the old house sought their smoke-scented couches, and soon after the Hall stood dark and silent amidst the snow.

That Christmas and those scenes finished the matter; for before long the couples came together, married, and, as the old stories say, lived happy ever after.

THE END.

A Christmas Ditty.

"HA—HA—HA—HA! ha—ha—ha!" laughed Shadrach—Shadrach Pratt, light porter at Teman, Sundry, and Sope's, the wholesale and retail grocers in Oxford-street. "Ha—ha—ha!" laughed Shadrach, stopping with one foot on the wet pavement and the other in the snowy slush of the kennel, to slap his thigh, and say: "That's a good 'un, that is. 'What do the Arabs of the desert live on?—the sand which is there.' That is a good one, rale grit. Ha—ha—ha!" laughed the little man. "I'll ask 'em that after dinner to-morrow."

Who'd have thought, to see the little fellow go skipping along through the wet, splashy snow, that there were holes in the sides of his boots, and that one sole had given up the stitches that morning and gone off, being not buried, but suffering the fiery ordeal of burning, curling about upon its funereal pyre as though still alive? Who'd have thought that he had had no dinner this Christmas eve, and was now off, post haste, to his home in Camden-town to get dinner and tea together—a hot meal of bloater and bread-and-butter—with orders to be back in an hour at the latest? For it was busy tide with the firm, and whatever Shadrach's duty may have been at other times, he was heavy porter now decidedly.

Away across Regent's Park, and then home in the pleasant and unsalubrious locality of Snow's-fields. Snow there was in plenty—muddy, slushy snow; but the only field visible was a large field for improvement; but then, as Shadrach said, "How handy for business!"

"Here's father!" was the cry, as the little man rushed in, hugged his wife, and had his legs hugged at the same time.

And then he was in the warm place by the tea-tray, toasting his steaming boots, and watching the water being poured into the hissing, hot earthen teapot.

"Now, then," said Mrs. Pratt, "they've all had their teas; and you're not to touch them, or give them a scrap. But have you had your dinner?"

"No," said Shadrach; "only stayed my stomach with half a pint of four ale and a hot tater, at one; but I've brought a bloat— There, bless my soul! I always did say the tail of your coat is not a safe place, and if I aint been setting upon it. What a good job it was a hard-roed 'un. Not hurt a bit. Who'll toast it?"

"Me—me—me!" chorused some six or seven voices.

And then the most substantial-looking of the family was picked out, and she began toasting till the fish began to curl its head and tail together, when the toaster happening to turn her head to watch the distribution of "dog's-bits"—i.e., scraps of bread-and-butter, the bloater glided from the fork, and had to be picked from the ashes and wiped.

But it was not so very gritty when done, and only made Shadrach think about the Arabs and the sandwiches; though, after distributing so many scraps, father's share of bloater, or grit, was not

large; and then up jumped the refreshed head of the family, and prepared for another start.

"Taint much, eighteen shillings a week, with a family, is it?" said Shadrach, counting the money out in his wife's hand; "but, never mind, there's lots worse off."

Mrs. Pratt gave a shrug, as much as to say, "And lots better." But, smiling again, she told what preparations had been made towards the next day.

"There, I can't stop," said Shadrach; "you must do it all. Goose, you know. Wait till it's quite late at market, and then you'll get it cheap. They can't sell them all out."

Mrs. Pratt seemed to think that the goose would make a fearful hole in eighteen shillings.

"There's coals, and grosheries, and vegetables, and bread, and butter; and Ginger's boots are in a sad state, and—and—"

Certainly Ginger's boots were in a sad state; but that was not of much consequence, according to the Countess de Noailles; and if she advocated bare feet amidst the aristocracy, she would have little pity for Ginger—domus name of Mr. Pratt's fourth son; for Shadrach was given to nicknaming his children in accordance with the common objects of his life—hence "Ginger," "Pepper," and "Spicy," were familiar terms for as many children.

"But didn't I, eh—the Christmas-box?" said Shadrach, pinching his chin, and looking innocent.

"Why, an old cheat!" cried Mrs. Pratt, rushing to the door, and finding a brown paper parcel resting behind the bulky umbrella upon her clogs.

And then, amidst a volley of cheers, bearing it to the table, which was directly surrounded by chairs, climbed upon by an escalading party, and it was only by dint of great presence of mind that Mrs. Pratt saved the brown paper citadel by hurriedly opening it, drawing out a pound of raisins, and bribing the attacking party by giving them a plum apiece.

"Ta ta! I'm off," cried Shadrach, with glistening eyes, as he hurried out and banged the door after him.

But only to climb on to the window-sill by means of holding on to the water-butt, and nearly pulling it over, when he could peep through a hole in the shutter and see his wife hold up to the eyes of the exultant children the Christmas-box regularly given by Teman, Sundry, and Sope to their *employés*. There was a pound of raisins, and a pound of currants, and a ditto brown sugar, a ditto lump, an ounce of spice, and a quarter of a pound of peel; which was the last packet opened when Shadrach leaped down and hurried away through the dirty street.

But it was fine now overhead, and the stars began to twinkle brightly, while the slushy roads were fast growing crisp; but not crisp enough to prevent moisture from creeping through into Shadrach's boots.

"Because they live on the sand which—law!" cried Shadrach, "what a pity we can't live on sand; what a lot the little 'uns do eat." And then he stopped short for a minute to hear some street singers spoiling a carol, and heard the reference to

a babe in a manger; and then somehow, as he trotted on, Shadrach could not see very clearly for thinking of two lambs lost from his humble fold; one sleeping in its little grave with the pure white snow covering its breast, and the bright stars like angels' eyes watching it; and the other—"My poor, poor bairn!" sobbed the little man, hurrying along; and then he was elbowing his way through the throng on London Bridge, eager to get back in time.

"That's the worst of music," said Shadrach; "it allus upsets me. Ah! yah! where are you running to, you young dog?" he cried to a boy, who, yelling out, "I would I were a bird," blundered on to the little man's favourite corn, and made him limp the rest of the way. "Not that sort of music, confound him. Would he was a bird, indeed! Pity he aint got his neck wrung for him. Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Shadrach, taking a long breath; "how bracing the wind is off the park! why, I do declare if I couldn't over posts or anything to-night."

But there was no room for Shadrach to run or over posts, for the streets were thronged with busy, hurrying people. The roadway was crowded too; and everywhere it was plain to see that Christmas was here. It was quite a blessing that some of the laden railway vans did not break down, for there would have been an absolute block; while, however it was possible for all the presents on the way to get to their destination in time, no one could say. Shops and people—ay, and weather too, all spoke of Christmas; people looked hearty and genial; the shops looked generous; while, though the weather felt cold, it was not a griping, nipping cold, but a warm, dry cold that made the slush hard and firm, and whispered of blazing fires and brave old English comforts.

God bless it! I love a Christmas night; and when I say a Christmas night, I mean any night in that jovial, happy tide, when men sink the care and money-hunting to spread enjoyment around; when the hand is open, either for a loving, brotherly pressure, or to aid a poorer brother; or, better still, the fatherless and the widow. The hand open—ay, and the heart too; for there seems to be breathed around a spirit that softens the hard crust, so that it is open to any emotion, be it such as begets mirth or tears. Who can say what it is? that loving, happy exhilaration that comes over us, and makes a man even kiss his mother-in-law roundly. Why, it's the very time to get your salary raised, is Christmas; and now the secret is out, I know I shall never be forgiven by the heads of firms, who will be pounds out of pocket for the future. Who ever kicked a dog at Christmas, or prosecuted a thief? Who ever gave a beggar a penny without a blush for the smallness of the sum? God bless it! though it comes so soon year after year to tell us how by twelve months our span of life is shorter, and that we are nearer to the long sleep. God bless it! and may its genial breath softly waft the incense from every frugal hearth in our land, and rest in love where the poor prepare their humble feast—ay, feast; for the simplest Christmas dinner is a feast sprinkled by the torch of "Christmas Present." There's something stirring in the very air, and the

bells sound as they do at no other time—they go home to the feelings, and call up from the past the happy emotions planted in our hearts by God; but

cheeks flush, and hands grasp hands in the fulness of heart to give a squeeze often accompanied by a twinkling eye, where a tear will force its way.



"CROUCHING THERE."

which a busy life and rude contact with the world have caused to flee away and hide. Back they come though, till, in the wild delight, eyes sparkle,

Holy—sacred—are these reunions—these family meetings; and sad is it when a seat becomes vacant; but is not that loss a bond to bind those

left the tighter, as wishing each other "a merry Christmas" as I do, they say, "God bless it!"?

Is there such a thing as a kind of magnetism in life, by which spirit whispers to spirit, and by some occult warning we know that those we love are near? Or why should old Shadrach start and shiver as he passed some one in the throng, and then mutter to himself, very thoughtfully—

"Poor Polly!"

But it was a busy night; and what baskets did Shadrach lug about from Oxford-street? East, west, north, and south—here, there, and everywhere. Light porter, indeed! Why, we won't insult him. But he didn't mind, bless you, though he groaned and grunted under his load of Christmas fruit; and there was something merry to say to every servant-lad who lightened his basket. Toast and ale, and egg-flip too, were waiting when ten o'clock struck, and though Mr. Sope wanted to keep open another hour, and Sundry said half an hour, old Teman, the head, said—

"No; regular hours were the thing; and it was not fair to the young men; and that if the Queen herself came from Buckingham Palace, and wanted a pound or two of fruit, she should not have it after the shutters were up."

It would have done your heart good to have seen Shadrach rattle up those shutters, as the boy down stairs held them up to the roller ready for him to take.

"Ter-r-r-r-rattle," went the shutters, as he dragged it over the roller, and then "flip-flip-flap," it was in its place. "Ter-r-r-r-rattle," went another, and nearly knocked an old gentleman over; but he only gave a leap, skip, and a jump, and laughed. Two shutters, and that big, nodding Chinese mandarin with the bare stomach is covered up. "Ter-r-r-r-rattle," and part of the big China punch-bowl covered. "Ter-r-r-r-rattle," and the whole is covered. At it again, and the squeezey, almond-eyed lady hidden. At it again, nine shutters up. At it again, skipping about as though he had never walked a step that day, but just come fresh out of a lavender and clover bed, ready for work, after lying by for a rest. "Ter-r-r-r-rattle-bing-bang-bump." He did it that time: knocked the policeman's helmet off, and sent it rolling along the pavement.

"God bless my soul!" said Shadrach, aghast at such an assault upon the law of the land.

But the policeman only laughed, and old Teman only laughed, and called the bobby up to the door, while he fetched him a glass of egg-flip himself, and wished him a "merry Christmas."

"Bang—slap—slip—flap—crack—jangle—jang—jink—jank—jank?"

There they are—the twelve shutters up, and both iron bars; screws rammed in, and all tight; and Shadrach not a bit out of breath. Shop closed, and no Queen to beg for a pound or two of fruit, and test old Teman's loyalty, as he ladled out the flip to his dozen men; when, wishing he could have poured his share into his pocket, Shadrach said "Good night," and was off, homeward.

Plenty of people in the streets yet, but the Park seemed empty on the west side when Shadrach reached it, and then stopped on the bridge to look

over at the water. A bright, calm, light night, with snow lying here and there in patches, upon roof, and all glittering in the light of the full moon. Lamps in lines across the Park. Frost laying hold of everything. But, warmed with exercise and genial draught, Shadrach felt not the cold, but stopped, gazing over at the sluggish canal, and comparing it, perhaps, with his life. But there was something else upon his mind—something that kept bringing a shadow over him, and kept him from hurrying home.

At length he stepped down, and walked slowly across the bridge; but then, with a strange, thoughtful, undecided step, he crossed over, and sauntered back again; and at last, stood leaning once more over the side, gazing at the glittering snow, till he started, for the clocks began to strike twelve. There were the faint and distant tones, and the sharp, clear tones of those at hand, mingled with which came the heavy boom of St. Paul's, till the last stroke had fallen upon his ear; when, with a half-shudder of cold, Shadrach once more stepped down, and commenced, with some display of vigour, his homeward walk.

There was scarcely a soul now to be seen upon the bridge; but as he reached the middle, Shadrach paused with a strange, tumultuous beating at his heart. For there, crouching down, was the figure of a woman, evidently half-frozen in the cold.

"Could she be meditating self-destruction?" Shadrach thought. "Could he save her? But why should such thoughts come, when he had often and often seen women of her class in the same attitude?"

He asked himself the question, and could find no answer, except that it was so sad to see a homeless outcast there upon a Christmas eve.

"Poor thing—poor thing," muttered Shadrach to himself; and then, going up, and speaking in a husky voice: "Had you not better go home, my girl?"

"What?" cried the girl, angrily—"home? There's no home for such as I."

"But the night—the cold—and—ah, my God!—Polly!"

Shadrach had advanced to the girl, and laid his hand upon her shoulder; when, starting, she turned hastily round, and confronted him beneath the lamp. A mutual recognition took place; when, with a bitter cry, the girl darted away, while her father staggered and fell, striking his head violently against the granite kerb.

But he soon recovered himself, slowly got up, looked hopelessly round at the deserted bridge, and then walked with feeble, uncertain steps in the direction of home.

The old Dutch clock upon the wall had given warning that it was about to strike one. The fire was low, and the candle burned with a long snuff, as Shadrach Pratt and his wife sat beside the fire, silent and tearful. There was an open Bible upon his lap, and he had been essaying to read; but the print looked blurred and confused, his voice was husky, and more than one tear had dropped upon the page where it said—"I will arise, and go to my father," and again, where "his father fell upon his

neck, and kissed him ; " and there was sorrow that night in the humble home.

The candle burned down, and quivered in the socket, and then went out. The fire sank together again and again with a musical tinkle, and then ceased to give forth its warmth. But through the two round holes in the shutters the bright moonbeams shone, bathing the couple with their light, as slowly they knelt down, and Shadrach repeated some words, stopping long upon that impressive clause—"As we forgive them that trespass against us."

"And you'll leave the back door unfastened, Mary?" whispered Shadrach.

Mrs. Pratt nodded.

"And forget the past if she should come?"

"Ah, me—ah, me! my poor girl!" cried the mother, thoroughly heart-broken; and for the first time since her child forsook her home showing any emotion—"what have we done that we should be her judge?"

The moonbeams shone brightly in as the couple rose, and, after listening for a moment at the stair-foot, Shadrach walked to the back-door, opened it, uttered a cry, and then fell upon his knees. For there, upon the cold snow, with her cheek resting upon the threshold, lay the lost one of the flock—cold, pale, and motionless, but with her hands outstretched and clasped together, as if praying for forgiveness. Stretched upon the cold snow, by the door she had stolen from two years before, lying where she had crept, with trembling hands, and quivering, fevered lips, whispering to herself that she would die there, for she dared ask no entrance.

Need the story be told of that Christmas-day, and of the joy in that poor man's home—of the sick one weeping in her mother's arms—of the welcome given to the one the world called lost! I trow not. But let us skip another year, and then stand in the same room, in the same place, and at the same hour, as with a bright light in his humble, ordinary face, Shadrach Pratt—a man not addicted to quoting Scripture—takes his homely wife's hand, and whispers—

"More than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

Under the Yellow Flag.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE sun was descending towards the west, and no friendly sail had come in sight; nothing but the blazing sea and sky everywhere, and not a breath of air to fan our cracked and blackened cheeks. We were still in the same positions: the sailors were crouching in the bows, while Timkin sat by the mast with a drawn knife in his hand, as if keeping them at bay, for twice had a threatening movement been made, and loud murmurs arisen. From beneath the awning there was not a sound—no movement to tell that there was life there amongst the five women it sheltered.

And this was the last day—the last hour, I told myself; and then I tried to think, to pray, to reason out the feelings that had oppressed me for these

weeks past—trying to follow out the thread, and wondering weakly that I should be seated there patiently, with *his* hand resting upon my shoulder.

"It will soon be sunset, now, Leslie," he said, softly; and I did not answer. "Sunset and oblivion for one of us; perhaps for both. But do you feel prepare to die?"

"Do you wish to madden me—to make more bitter my last hours? Have you not wronged me cruelly? And now would you insult and torture me till my last breath has been drawn?"

"No, no, no," he said, slowly.

"Why did you come—why are you here?"

"Did I not tell you of my forebodings—of feelings so intense that they half maddened me? Did I not go about haunted by a strange feeling of coming peril and of danger threatening her I loved—keep back your hand, it is needless—I say it, threatening her I loved passionately, with all my heart? And could I stay? I loved her, and I love her still, with a love that has left no spot upon her pure, sweet heart. Why did I come? I came to die for her, if need were—to die for her and him she loved! It was not my wish to give you pain, Leslie; and it was to save you pain that I made her promise not to reveal the passion that in a fit of madness I had declared to her."

I bowed my head.

"I fancied that I had done wisely and well; but I find that I was only weak and erring. Then, determined to bear with patience my hard lot, I worked on, early and late, Leslie; but something came over me—what was it?—a warning?—an inspiration? Enough that I knew no rest till I stood on board there, ready to share your peril, and defend you both, even to the death."

"Are you a man?" I exclaimed. "There, in God's name leave me!"

I bent down over the little face that I had so loved; and now, for the first time, the weak tears began to flow, though each drop seemed like so much molten fire.

"Leslie," he whispered in my ear, "I cannot yet leave you. Listen to the words of a dying man. Every word I have spoken to you is as true as that the great God hears those words. I forgive you, your every unjust suspicion; as, if you are saved, you will be forgiven by her whose face you bathe with your tears. I followed you on board that unfortunate ship but for one purpose, as God is my judge. At nightfall you shall have the proof."

I heard his words, but I did not move, for the wild misty feeling was again closing round me.

Then the fields, the pleasant groves of waving trees, and the cooling streams passed away, and I was looking upon his face alone, lit up by the last glow in the western sky,

Plain—plainer: was it a dream? was it visionary? No! I was bending over the face of Paul Graham, setting fast in death; and, as I did so, a light seemed to flash into my poor, misty brain—a brain obscured from the day when I saw him standing, fair and goodly to look upon, by that cabin hatch, till now, when, feeble and helpless from suffering, I gazed on and on, with the light coming stronger and stronger, as the darkness was gradually chased from every

gloomy place. I seemed to read the story in his features, word by word, in words as truthful as those he had uttered to me a few hours before; and then, without a sigh or groan, I sank back, and knew no more.

CHAPTER XXV.

"BETTER not, sir—better not. You're getting stronger fast; but I don't think you ought to listen yet."

The words were those of the big sailor, who had helped me on the deck of a large ship, in whose cabin I had been lying for a fortnight, fighting with the weakness that had prostrated me. Timkin seemed but the shadow of his former self, as he, tenderly as a woman, arranged my pillows, and propped me up, so that I could gaze out of the gangway at the white houses and green woodlands behind the pleasant-looking Austral port where we lay at anchor.

"Tell me all," I said, impatiently; "for it only frets me to try and surmise."

"Oh, I'll tell you, sir," said Timkin, gruffly; "only I thought you'd be better without. You see, it was like this. The men had got to be half mad, when Ellis, the short little chap, you know" (he was a man of about five feet ten inches), "got tasting some of the salt water—driven to it, like, though he must have known how bad it would make him. Then he turned fierce and wild, and the others caught it of him; so that at last it seemed as though, if I tried to go against them, we should have a fight, and somebody would be killed; and though I knew it must come to that sooner or later, I wanted to put it off. So, when they'd had a talk together about doing that, saying as it was the only way to save the rest alive, I seemed to go with them just as if I agreed, only putting it off till the next day; for I says to myself, I says—

"Perhaps something may turn up in that time."

"When we got forward, that there Ellis had hold of a bit o' paper out o' the lining of a hat, and he was making marks on it with a bit o' pencil.

"How many have you got?" says Mr. Graham.

"Dozen," says Ellis, fiercely; but winking and blinking, and, spite of his blistered face, looking all guilty like, as if he had been a committing a murder, or caught stealing something out of his mess-mate's chest.

"Give me the hat," says Mr. Graham, then; and he tore up the pieces of paper and threw 'em over the side, just as I was going to whisper to him that it was best to let 'em go on in their own way, for it all took time, and that was what we wanted; for, of course, I never meant it to quite come to that.

"Do you call yourselves men?" he says quite fiercely; 'and those helpless women left in your charge!"

"Nobody tried to say anything in answer, only they sat glaring like so many wolves; and I about felt like one myself just then. Then Mr. Graham left us, to fetch you up and to tell you about it; and you remember, p'raps, how it all went on till the lots were drawn with yarn, and it was to be you; and I don't know how it was, but I got troubled like to see Mr. Graham look pleased about it, and sit

with his eyes shut for a few minutes, just as if he was a-sayin' his prayers because he was so glad it wasn't him. For you see, sir, I didn't quite understand him then, though I knew he was the right sort, and would have made as good a sailor as ever stepped a deck, if it hadn't been his misfortun' to be born a landsman.

"Then it seemed to me to be time to stop 'em, and I got fierce, and said as it shouldn't be till night, and came alongside of Mr. Graham, so as to keep them off; for they meant mischief, but I wasn't afraid. And then Mr. Graham was talking to you ever so long, and you seemed fierce, and him humble and mild, as though you would quarrel, and he wouldn't. Just then my brain seemed to get muddled, and I couldn't think—things wouldn't come straight, but all tumbled up together, till, as the afternoon went on, somehow I got to suppose that it wasn't you they wanted to kill, but me; because I had made them put it off, so as to see whether a ship would heave in sight, and take us off. Then that wasn't it; but they wanted to scuttle the boat, so as to go down and cruise till we could find old Teapot, who'd been the cause of all the mischief; or else Ellis had, in the first place, through cutting off his tail. Then I got so muddled that things began going round, and round, and round, boat and all—just like one of them paddle-steamers with two engines turning one wheel one way and one another.

"The only way I could get the better of it was by shaking my head now and then, and giving it a dip in the sea over the side of the boat. But even that wasn't enough after a while; and as I sat facing them three chaps in the bows, they kept coming nearer and nearer to me, till I seemed to feel their eyes burning me, and looking into me like wolves' eyes. Then I'd shake my head again, staring hard at them the while, when they'd be going slowly back again, further and further, till they looked to me a mile off; just as if it was a picture that somebody brought close up to my eyes, and then drew right back again, further and further off.

"What bothered me the most was, that I couldn't make out and tell which was real and which wasn't real, no matter how much I shook my head. And, besides, I didn't want them three wolves forward to see I was badly, or they'd have been at you in a jiffy, tearing and raging, Mr. Graham being now 'most as weak as a child, and I knew not able to do much towards saving you. I'd got three knives from them; but the sun shone bright on something for a moment, just after I shook my head once, and got it a little clear, and I saw then that Ellis had another knife open, and stuck in his belt.

"Then I came over all cloudy again, and didn't know what went on, only that I could feel myself sitting and staring forward, to keep off the wolves. And, do you know, sir, them cloudy, sleepy times kept on coming oftener and oftener, and lasting longer and longer; so that at last, I believe if they'd been left alone, it would soon have been all cloudy time, and I shouldn't have roused up to shake my head no more.

"It was quite a relief to rouse up and find that all things were just as they was when the fits came on: all still under the matting, as if them poor

ladies was all gone on the long cruise; you leaning down over your good lady—God bless her!—and Mr. Graham sitting quiet and half smiling alongside me.

"Now and then I used to take a good long sweep at the offing; sometimes to see all blank, sometimes to find a ship or two; but I'd seen them so many times, now sailing towards us, now stern on, that I took not much notice of them; for I'd got to know that it was wanting to see ships that made me fancy I could see them, and I didn't want to rouse up the wolves, now that they were quiet and waiting. So, being clear for a little while, I began to think what I'd best do, as night would soon be upon us, and them three forward coming aft, wild and savage.

"I'd got a plan in my head, and was putting it straight, when there came a loud, strange sort of laugh from under the awning, and I found that it was the poor skipper's lady, who was lying back, staring straight up at where the sun shone bright through the matting. I knew I could do nothing, so I turned back, and began to put my plan in order again; and though, you see, it was all nonsense, yet it seemed all right enough then, and I was as serious as could be. I knew we were afloat, and that there was trouble and mutiny aboard; but my eyes seemed to make things larger, or else werry far off, so that I couldn't tell no difference between that there boat and our old three-master. So I got arranging that we three was to lay hold of they three when they came aft; then another horrible laugh from under the matting put me out, so that I had to begin all over again to put my plans straight, and got as far as we three seizing they three, when I had to begin shaking my head, only it did no good, and all got cloudy again.

"Once more I got clear, with them wolves still keeping back from me, and not having seen how blank I'd been; and I started afresh putting things straight, till I got to our seizing them, when that laugh came again; but I wouldn't hear it, only stopped up my ears, while I kept on trying to get it straight, and at last I did. And what do you think my plan was? Why, that when they was seized, we was to make a whip with a running noose, and hoist each one into one of the tops—fore, main, and mizen, and there keep 'em prisoners till some ship came and took us off. All of which just shows what rubbish and stuff a poor chap can fancy when he's in such trouble as we suffered."

I stopped the narrator here, to send down to the cabin to make inquiries; and, in answer, I received a few lines written feebly in pencil; but they were enough to send a gladdening glow to my heart, and seemed to revive me even more than the soft, fresh breeze wafted from off the shore.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"WELL, you see, sir," continued Timkin, as he once more anchored his huge person beside me on the deck, "being in that queer, muddled way, and not knowing how things were going, I asked Mr. Graham to help me to keep watch, when he said that he'd never had his eyes off them three for hours past. On hearing this, I felt a bit more easy, though I'd given up making plans now, since

they all seemed to tumble to pieces, or get leaky for want of proper stuff to put 'em together with. But I thought that Mr. Graham might be able to help one a bit, and so felt to trust to him a little as to what we were to do, since I knew it must come to a struggle soon.

"They'd been pretty quiet in the bows; but I knew that as soon as it got to be dusk they would turn wild and come aft. And now, for the first time, I began to shiver for dread, for I knew that no ship could now come in time—leastwise, so I told myself. And I began to shake my head, and fight hard to keep clear of the cloudy feeling that would come down faster and faster, just as it seemed that the wolves were coming aft.

"I've thought since, sir, that this was only a fancy, for I must have been half out of my mind like for a little while. But then, everything that passed then seems now so strange, and mixed up, and confused like, that what can we do, only try to pick up a bit of light here, and another there; for as to telling how long it all took, I can't. All I know is that I seemed to wake up as out of sleep, when I ought to have been watching, by finding myself overboard, struggling in the water a few yards from the boat, while I could see that there was a fight going on, for the cutter rocked here and there, sending the calm sea off in little waves, as I swam back, and, getting hold of the side, tried to climb in.

"But perhaps you know that, for even a strong man, it's no easy thing to get from the water into a boat, which slips from you, or seems to draw you under the bottom. And there I was, weak and helpless, trying to get back, and feeling that I had been knocked over in the struggle, just at a time when I was most wanted, for there was Mr. Graham keeping two of the wolves off, while the other was trying to drag you away from the arms that were now wound round your neck.

"I tried hard—hard as a man could try, and at last I got over the gunwale; but I was too late: it had all took place before I could get to them. As I hung there, trying to get over, Mr. Graham was fiercely fighting, calling to me, too, to come and help him; but fierce as he fought, and as them two wolves tried to get by him, it was but a weak, helpless sort of affair; for they'd none of them any strength left. At last, just as I did get one leg into the boat, I saw Mr. Graham get Ellis down and half over the side, holding him bent back over the rowlocks, while he turned to face the other, who tried to drag him away, calling at the same time to Marks, who held you, to come to his help. Then there was a flash-like light, as I saw Ellis lift one hand and strike Mr. Graham over the shoulder, when the poor fellow, sir, started to his feet, beating back the wolf who held him. There was a slight splash as Ellis glided over the side, to beat about in the water for a few minutes in a weak fashion, and then sink out of sight before a hand could be stretched out; for all were staggered like at seeing Mr. Graham standing there fighting, as it were, wildly with death, as the blood gushed from a great gaping knife wound. He clutched again at the air, as if there was something that he might seize; then he turned half round to where you lay, sir; and in

the bright light I could see him give a half smile as he fell, striking against you, and then rolling over as you found him—dead.

"I believe Ellis might have been saved when he came up once to beat the water for a few seconds; but the others were so taken aback now they saw the extent of the mischief, that they did not stir until it was too late. For, though a couple of oars were shoved out from the side, and the boat put about as they pulled her to the spot, he never rose again.

"You may remember coming to a little, and seeing poor Mr. Graham, as he lay there, sir; while as for the two men, they crawled forward again and lay there, too cowed and weak to try to hurt any one more.

"Just then, as if to save our lives, there came up real clouds, and a heavy rain fell; so that I could catch some, and scoop some out of the bottom of the boat into pannikins and balers, sopping it up with a handkerchief, and squeezing it; and even, in the horrible thirst I felt, doing as them two in the bows did too—licking the moisture off the thwarts and sides of the boat.

"The few drops I forced between the lips of first one and then another must have saved some lives, and I did the best I could; but only with a hard fight with two or three, who were insensible like you, and part of the water was spilled—water of which I grudged you every drop, sir, so much that I had to bite my tongue as I gave it you. For, you see, at times like that, discipline and duty are hard to keep up; and a man wants to run back to his savage state of nature.

"After that rain a breeze sprang up, and I set the sail, and crawled aft to the tiller. Then came the long night of darkness, with me steering, and the boat flying before the wind—all sorts of strange things seeming to keep us company all night long, such as curious-looking sharks, waiting to leap on board, and take us down. At last the morning came, with its hot sun licking up in an hour or two all the little moisture left from the rain.

"And I can tell you no more, sir, only that I remember the clouds coming very thick over me at last, as I kept fast hold of the tiller, with the boat flying before the wind, which did not drop."

"But I can," said a voice at my elbow, which was that of the first mate of the ship, the captain being ashore; "and I'm glad to see you mending so fast, Mr. Leslie. Mrs. Leslie and Mrs. Black, too, are much better I hear. You see," he continued, taking up, as it were, the story where Timkin had ceased, "we caught sight of you when it was getting towards sunset, just a fortnight ago to-day, lying right off our larboard bow. One of the men reported a sail, and for a time we took but little notice, till it was taken into consideration that it was very unusual for a small boat to be scudding along before the wind where we were then. So, as her course was but little out of our track, we ran towards you, wondering much that there should be no signals made; until we drew nearer, when we made out our great friend here at the tiller, with his head down, and a couple of figures lying in the bows. Then, seeing that something was wrong, we contrived, after a good deal of trouble, to

overhaul you, by having a boat got ready, and then contriving to take the wind out of your sail by following you close up.

"Perhaps, under the circumstances, Mr. Leslie, it would not be advisable to go too closely into facts, for you are weak yet. What?—you wish me to proceed. You feel strong enough? Well," he continued, in a softened tone of voice, "we had the living on board as quickly as possible, hardly able though we were to tell the living from the dead, to whom Christian burial was given the same evening."

"To how many?"

"To how many? Four—two of each sex; and Mrs. Black was, for some days after, hovering on the brink. I wonder any of the ladies survived so fearful an ordeal."

CHAPTER XXVII.

BY degrees I learned more and more respecting those who had been on board the ill-fated vessel. The two boat-loads which first deserted us were picked up, after terrible sufferings, but without loss of life, while as to the boat sent from the island, Mr. Thomas managed, after passing through endless dangers and running the gauntlet of death again and again, to reach Batavia in safety. The small vessel that was sent thence to our rescue did not, however, arrive at the island till some days after our departure, when, finding three prahus at anchor, they were compelled to retreat, though they hung about for quite a fortnight, visiting the place twice afterwards, to find scarcely a vestige of our sojourn.

As I said at the commencement of this simple narrative, if such things were possible, and any wish of mine could be gratified, my own desire would be to look upon Paul Graham again in the flesh; to take him by his true and faithful hand, and say to him, "Forgive me, I was blind;" for it was only in his death that the light broke upon my mental vision.

THE END.

The next number will contain the opening chapters of a story of adventure by the Author of "Under the Yellow Flag."

The new story will be entitled JACK LAW'S LOG.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

THE LOG OF JACK LAW.

A NEW YEAR'S YARN.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.



"ROLLED OVER, STUNNED AND BLEEDING."—(Page 14.) }

The Log of Jack Law.
A NEW YEAR'S YARN.
BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER I.—HOW JACK LAW SAW AN ANGEL.



LOG of Jack Law, able seaman, once on board the clipper *Southern Cross*, trading to Sydney and carrying passengers. Only a rough sailor; but proud of that ship I was, for a sweeter thing never raced over the great ocean. I've done what many a man would say was childish about the fate of that ship as I sailed in for years—I've turned wet-eyed about her; but then other things perhaps

had something to do with it, as you'll say yourself when you hear all. Only a rough sailor, and very ignorant; but I've weathered many a storm at sea, and now sit here to let you take all the yarn down, just as it happened, word for word, fact for fact, bit by bit; and, if you like, I'll kiss the Book afore starting. But not as I think as you'll doubt the word of a honest sailor, as begins quietly to tell you a heart-rending story of things as seem burned into my memory, burned in deep; and in the bright sunshine, as in the blackest night as ever the great God sent to cover the broad ocean, I can see it all plain as plain—bright faces drawn with horror, bloodied and suffering, hard fighting for the breath of life, and the thought always strong on one as there's demons on this earth of ours so black and treacherous in their hearts that the father of all evil can't show anything worse.

That's strong language, very strong; but wait till I've got through my yarn, and then see if you don't think same as I do; while if you ever light upon Miss Mary, tell her I'm only a poor forgetful chap, but her name's been in my prayers such nights as I've said 'em; and if—if—ever—there, that's a sort of shaking that comes over me from being so much amongst salt water—if ever you talk about this, now she was a good man of her station and calls him husband, and she has children, tell her, I pray God to put it into her dear heart to teach her little ones to remember the name of poor Jack Law.

We had a good run out—a swift run, I can tell you: not a storm to speak of, nor hardly a head wind; but all went smooth as could be. All the first part of the voyage the passengers were uncommonly well, and by consequence good-tempered; while, of course, towards the last part they got tired

and disagreeable, as people always is over a long voyage. But last of all we sighted land, and soon after, there we were alongside of one of the wharves in Sydney harbour, high out of the water, and with best part of our cargo ashore, when the *Burra-Burra*, as sailed the same day as us from Liverpool, stood into the port.

Time went on, and we got the rest of the lading out of her, working away like trumps—making the ropes sing through the blocks as we hauled out the bales of cotton goods and implements and machines we had brought out; but there we were at last cleared out, and there we lay, only think, within two days of Christmas, and the sun ready to boil the tallow in the casks as lay there on the wharves—hundreds and hundreds of them—waiting for shipment, and not smelling none too nice neither. There was the pitch oozing out of the seams, and so sure as you put your hand down anywhere, tight it stuck, or else you snatched it off in a hurry to keep it from being blistered.

The awning was up over part of the deck; but of course all was clear over the hatchways, where we'd been getting in cargo, when one day it was long-shore time, and one part of the cargo being shipped we'd come to a break, so that some of our fellows were up the town, when my mate, Tom Everard—not the mate of the ship, you know, but my mate, who was good friends with me, being in my watch mostly, and sleeping in the next hammock—Tom Everard stood aside me, and we was leaning over the bulwarks a-spitting down at the flies for want of something better to do, being a hot, lazy sort of afternoon, when Tom says—

"I shall be thundering glad when we gets off again, for I don't like this place a bit. I want to get home, Jack," he says, "and yet I can't feel comfortable; for somehow it seems to me as I sha'n't get back any more, old chap."

"Gammon," I says; "what's the good of talking like that? Now, if you were going back in, that tub," I says, pointing to the *Burra-Burra*, "why, you might be okkard; but in a clipper like this you're safer than you would be ashore."

Tom never said no more then; for being a quiet, thoughtful sort of chap, he would stand and think for long enough, having a clever head with brains, you know, as helped him to put things right.

"But I don't know," I thinks to myself, "what's the good of being clever, and getting fancies in your head about not getting home all right, when there's nothing to be 'fraid of."

"I shall be thundering glad when we get away again, Jack, and gets started," he says, after a bit, "for I don't like this place at all."

"Well, there's no altering it," I says, "without one had a chance of looking at it through a glass of grog."

"You see 'tain't natural," says Tom; "everything's on backwards."

"Why, how's that?" I says.

"Why," says Tom, "here's Christmas; and instead of it's being a good, sensible snow-storm or a stinging, sharp frost, as would make a bit of fire comfortable, here we are, so that I don't believe a bit of fresh meat would keep a day."

"True for you," I says. "'Tis hot, and dusty too, seemingly, up town. What next?"

"What next!" he says; "why, everything. You don't see much down here in the harbour, and you don't see many of 'em, sartinly; but just look at the natives—all black, like so many niggers, when they ought to be white."

"Not they," I says. "It was a charity to make 'em black, they're such dirty beggars; and now they don't show it."

"Then," says Tom, "I've never seen it; but I've read of it in books as the animals all lays eggs; and the birds ain't got no wings to fly with; and the leaves of the trees don't grow like leaves do in other places, with a top side and a bottom side, but grow edgeways; and, altogether, you goes by the rules of contrary: it's all upside down. Don't you remember that game as we used to play at home—'Here we go round the rules of contrary;' and holding on by the corners of a handkercher? When I say hold fast you must let go, and when I say let go you must hold fast—forfeits, you know?"

"No, I don't," I says; "I never played."

"What! not when you were a young un at home?" he says.

"No," I says, gruffly, "I never played; and I never was a young un, and never had a home."

"What do you mean?" he says.

"I was a work'us boy," I says; "leastways I never felt like a boy, but like somebody very old; and I got kicked and cuffed about in the world till I ran away to sea. I never had no play in my life, Tom. People always seemed to have a spite agen me."

"Didn't you never know your father and mother, Jack?" he says, softly.

"No, mate," I says; "and I don't s'pose I ever shall now."

"There's something nice about that, too," says Tom. "My old man's gone; but I get thinking of the old woman of a night, and think I should like to get back and see her again; but I can't seem to see it, somehow."

"Don't be soft," I says; for it kind of upset me.

For I liked Tom Everard, as was as true a mate as ever stood by one; and you see there was a something inside me always a growing like, as if I wanted to love some one; and when he talked about his old mother, it worried me, and set me thinking about how nice it would be to have a pleasant, loving old face to welcome you when you got back from a voyage. But I pitched all that overboard directly, and I turns to Tom again, when he says once more—

"Yes," he says, "it's all upside down."

"Well, of course it is," I says; "aint we t'other side of the world?"

"No, we aint," says Tom; "we're here."

And he spoke gruff.

"Well, but you know what I mean," I says.

And then we should have gone on ever so long, only I saw as Tom looked all in the downs, so I roars out a bit of "Tom Tough"—

"So I seized the capstan bar,
Like a true British tar,

And in spite of tears and sorrow sang out

Yo, heave yo!

And in spite of tears and sorrow sang out—"

Nothing at all, for there was a gentleman down below on the wharf with a couple of young ladies with him, as looked like his daughters, and he seemed to be peeping about as if he wanted to come on board. So I stopped my bit of song quite short, and looked down at him.

"Captain on board, my man?" he says, in a short, quick, sharp way, just as if he was giving an order.

"No, sir," I says, touching my hat; "mate is, sir."

And then he led one of the young ladies up the hatches as was laid across from the deck to the wharf, and the other seemed half afraid to follow, as she stood looking down at the depth between the wharf and the ship's side. So I swings over on to the wharf at her side, and then holds out my hand to steady her and lead her aboard, when she smiled at me as if she knew it would be all right, and laid her pretty little yellow kid-gloved hand in my great tarry fist, and I had her safe aboard in no time, when she looked at me, and said—

"Thank you, sailor."

And she spoke in such a sweet way that it sounded like music. Just then, though, I happened to look down, and saw that I'd left the marks of my hand upon her delicate little glove; and I felt that savage and vexed, as I stood there rubbing my fist down the side of my canvas trousers, I hardly knew what to do. I felt as silly as a great gal, and she knew it, and looked at her glove, and then made a face at it, and then laughed and nodded at me; when, being only a poor ignorant sort of fellow, I felt just as if I should have liked to have been her dog, or to have lain down for her to wipe her shoes on me.

Now, that's a strange way of speaking, too, you'll say; but just bear in mind that I'd been best part of my life at sea among men, and the little I had seen of womankind had not been enough to make me think much of them.

"Mr. Watts aint aboard," says Tom to me, in a whisper, and showing his elbow right into my ribs, as if he meant to let in daylight—"he went ashore more'n an hour ago."

"Where shall we find the mate?" says the gentleman just then; and a fine fierce-looking old fellow he looked, browner than Tom Everard or me—a regular coppery brown, as if him and the sun was very old friends. Sharp eyes, too, he had—hook nose, and grey hair, while his great white beard covered his face; and as to the two young ladies with him, as seemed to be his daughters, they looked to me more like angels than anything else. So, "Where shall we find the mate?" says the gentleman, sharply; and in my stupid blundering way I was obliged to tell him that I'd made a mistake.

"Never mind, my man," he says; "but I've taken a passage home to the old country in your ship, for economy's sake, and my daughters thought they would like a look round. You and that other man are two of the sailors, I suppose, eh?" he says, in his short, sharp way.

"Yes, sir," I says, again touching my hat, for he spoke just like a navy captain.

"Glad of it," he says; "there's a honest look about you British tars that I should be glad to see a little more of in our own service. There, you can drink the young ladies' health when you go ashore," and he gave me a shilling. "I suppose," he says, "you'll take us home safe; I've heard a good character of the ship."

"That we will, sir," I says, "for a better ship never sailed. She's a regular clipper, sir, with a good captain and mate. *He's* certainly a bit stiff with the men, sir, and lets go a bit; but he's as proud of this vessel, sir, as if she was his own child. You couldn't get back home a safer way, sir, as my mate there would tell you."

But Tom Everard, instead, poor chap, of coming forward like a man and saying a word for his ship, began to sidle off, and got round behind the long-boat, while I got on talking about the vessel, being proud of her, and feeling bound, since Tom left me in the lurch, till, what with talking in such company, and having such listeners taking in eagerly every word I said, I got quite hot and red in the face; while the recollection of being called honest-looking and a British tar took the wind out of my sails; so that, catching one of the young ladies' eyes, I stammered and broke down all at once.

"Bravo!" says the gentleman then, as he tapped me on the shoulder with his stick; "I like a man to be proud of his ship."

Then I saw both the young ladies smile, and I thought that it was at me, and that made me feel more blundering than ever; so that when I took and showed them all over the ship, taking them in the cabins and different parts, and told them of how quickly we had come out, I'm afraid I did it very clumsily. But they all thanked me, and when the gentleman turned round to me and gave me a card for the captain—one which I got Tom to read afterwards, for I hadn't learnt then; when he said it was Major Ralph Dean—he took one young lady by the hand and led her ashore—the one he brought aboard, with long dark hair; the other one, who had bright golden-yellow curls floating half down her back, she gave me her hand again, just as if it was quite natural for her so to do, and tripped lightly over the hatchway to the wharf, and all the time I held that little bit of a hand tightly clasped in mine. And then again she said, "Thank you, sailor," in such a sweet musical way, while I stood looking after them till they were gone. And somehow, as I stood there on that wharf, standing alongside a cask of tallow, with the warehouses on one side and our ship on the other, it seemed to me as if something had come over the day, so that all the brightness had gone out of it, and left it dull and heavy, so that it pressed on me. But there was the gentle pressure of that little soft gloved hand in mine still, and now I opened it there was another shilling there—this shilling as is sewed up in a little leather purse, and hangs round my neck just over where Tom tattooed the cross; for, you know, we sailors are very fond of having a cross made on our chest or back, in case we should ever be thrown up dead on a strange coast where they're Catholics. For if they see that, the people will give you a decent burial, and not leave you to rot for a heretic

dog. We run a good many risks of being wrecked, we sailors, and there's a many thousand miles of coast-line in this world where the people are Catholics. But there that shilling hangs round my neck,



where I hope it will always hang, till, if I 'scape all wrecks and die quietly afloat, I'm sewn up in my hammock, and the twenty-four pound shot takes me and that little coin to the bottom.

CHAPTER II.—HOW JACK LAW SAW THE OTHER THING.

"CHEER'LY, men, O—yo ho!" with the long, mellow-sounding cry echoing far and wide over the smooth water that seemed to send the sun flashing back with unbearable heat. "Cheer'ly, men, O—yo ho!" and up came another, and then down it was lowered into the deep hold, where some of our fellows rolled 'em along into their places, cask after cask of tallow, on that hot January day, out there by the wharf in that far-off land. But we were at work with a will, bringing cask after cask aboard, so that the good old ship began to show the water creeping up her sides as she settled down more and more.

"Cheer'ly, men, O—yo ho!" we sang out, working away in the bright clear sunshine—ay, and working hard, too, for some of our chaps were thinking of 'home, sweet home!' Not as it troubled me much, for all places seemed the same to me then; but I'll tell you what did trouble me, and that was the queer, low way into which my mate Tom Everard had got; for, 'cept when we were hard at work, he'd sit and think, and kinder mope, as if something was on his mind, and all I could say or do went just as nothing at all.

I said as all places seemed much the same to me; but, after all, I did not care about staying at Sydney, for, you see, it's all very well, but 'taint much account after all. It seems to me a noisy, bouncy sort of a place—like a big bully boy trying to show how grand he is, when he aint got neither stamina nor bottom. 'Taint old, nor solid, nor

strong. Of course it will be some day or another; but to my way of thinking it aint come to that yet, though, after all, it don't much matter to me now, being able seaman in her Majesty's fleet in a good ship, with good officers, and not much to grumble about. I'm only saying this about Sydney as an excuse for our chaps thinking about home again, when so many people are in such a hurry to get out there to make fortunes, as they call it.

Time I'm telling you of, the big rush of the gold fever was over; but we'd brought out a good many miners' things for the diggings, and often of a watch some of our chaps would be talking about sloping, and making tracks for the gold country; but somehow we got to know of so much misery and rough work, and of how very few out of thousands turned up trump cards, that till just before we sailed no one from our ship went, and fine and pleased the captain and Mr. Watts (our mate) were. Tom Everard used to talk to me about it, and if he'd have gone, why, of course, I should; but, he says, as we had a good ship and a good captain, he wouldn't be one to desert, even if he was sure of a slice of luck.

Now, mind you, I don't know but what I felt a bit disappointed to hear him talk like that, for there would have been a bit of excitement and change up there; but things were settled different, and my work was cut out in a very different way.

We got our tallow on board—stowed and jammed so that, I don't care how the ship lurched, there would be no shifting of cargo down in the hold; for our first mate, Mr. Watts—old "Hammer and Tongs" we used to call him—was a first-rate sailor, and would have everything done to rights, and keep us at it over and over again until it was done well. Of course our chaps didn't like him none the better; but he was a good mate, all the same.

Well, the tallow being aboard, we had other odd lots of lading to see to—awkward lots, you know—mixed sorts; wool and copper: the one all bulk, and the other all weight—in a little room; and that was stowed low down, in a place left on purpose. Talk about packing and stowing! I believe nobody could have thought as all the heaps of stuff lying about on the wharf could have been got down in the hold of our ship, and out of sight. But, however, there it all was; and next thing doing was a whim of the mate's being seen to.

You see our cap. was a very easy-going fellow, with no end of trust in the mate; and one day, when I was standing on the poop, Mr. Watts says to the captain—

"Now, suppose, going home, we nearly lose our rudder again?"

"Well," says the captain, "we must try and re-ship her."

"That's all very well," says Mr. Watts, bringing up a bit of a storm we ran through coming out, when a great wave unshipped the rudder, and snapped one of the chains—"that's all very well," he says; "but suppose t'other chain had snapped, how then?"

"Why, we should have lost the ship, eh?" says the captain.

"Most likely," says old Watts, mopping his head; "so now I want a dodge of mine put into action.

I want double rudder-chains put; for that steering-stick unships much too easy for my fancy."

"All right, Watts," says the captain; "nothing like making sure."

And then he went ashore, when the old mate lost no time in getting men from the highest ship-yard; and, after mending the old chain that was broken, they sent in bolts and eyes on each side of the poop, and doubled the rudder-chains—which, you know, are the loose chains you can see behind a ship to keep the rudder from swinging off and getting away if she's unshipped in a storm; while the custom in ships is to only have one on each side.

Well, the shipsmiths and carpenters laughed, and among others I laughed, and afterwards I grumbled; for old Watts sent me down, after the men had gone, to give the chains a fresh coat of tar,—being an awkward place to get to under the stern windows. But many a time since, when I've thought of those double chains, and how they saved my life, I've felt a sort of strange tremble go through me, as I can picture the place again, all as clear and plain as can be, and see myself pale and trembling clinging there, with the sharks rushing about under me; while I'm so faint when I think of it, that I believe if I gave way I should go down like a weak girl.

Ships will only hold so much, you know; and so, our cargo being aboard, we were beginning to grow short of a job, and the mate was talking about battening down hatches; when one day the captain comes aboard, and began telling Mr. Watts to get a place ready for I don't know how many thousand ounces of gold as we were to take back.



"Hear that, Tom?" I says in a whisper to my mate.

"Hear what?" says he.

"Why, we're a-going to shy all the tallow overboard, and fill up with gold."

"Gammon!" he says; and then he turned away, for he had one of his dumpy fits on him. But the next morning down comes the gold, with a convoy

of police round the trucks; and then we had to carry aboard a lot of little wood chests, painted and marked, and bound with iron. Precious heavy they were too, for such little bits of things; and I don't know how much they wasn't worth apiece; and there was a man with 'em, and old Watts, both of 'em checking them off, and copying down the numbers and marks into little books as the chests were carried aboard. But when they were stowed down in the little store-place got ready on purpose, they didn't seem to take up much room, and one didn't feel a bit dazzled or struck.

"Why, there don't seem nothing to make such a jolly fuss about, Tom, mate," I says.

"You're right, Jack," he says; "and yet three of them chaps is going to stay aboard and keep watch, till we sails."

"Well, I s'pose it's all right," I says; "but there aint much to show, if it is rich cargo; and for my part," I says, "I'd rather go in for tallow."

We were pretty busy getting in fresh meat and vegetables, and taking in our water, and one thing or another; but do what I would, somehow I could not help longing for sailing-time, and, though I wouldn't own to it myself—for of course I should have been ready to call myself a fool if I had—I could not help feeling that it was because of the passengers who were coming on board.

But talk about passengers; we had a fine game one day while one of them was on board. He was down on the lower deck, smelling about and talking to the men, while he was evidently trying to hear and see all he could. He was a bounceable fellow, with a big black beard—one of a party of six going back with us. They'd been partners up at the gold-diggings, and were going to bring their gold on board too, and a precious fuss they made with the captain about it's being safe, and proper protection, and so on. They'd been backwards and forwards, all of 'em, several times, and bothering the captain so much, that one day after they'd been I heard the captain say—

"Tell you what, Mr. Watts, I've a half a mind not to take 'em. I can let their berths fast enough; and really I don't like the look of them."

"But they've paid the passage money, haven't they?" says old Watts.

"Yes," says the captain. "That's the worst of it; and I'm afraid of some upset with the owners."

For that day the captain was very wild, on account of some of our men who had leave on shore; and somehow or another, by some planned job, they stopped ashore—sloped, just when such a thing was least expected. But next day the captain came aboard rubbing his hands and smiling, to tell the mate as he had found some fresh men willing to ship, though the wages they asked was high; and I remember that we were all a bit surprised at the captain's luck, while two ships in harbour at that very time lay waiting for hands to man them.

And now about this big, black-bearded passenger.

CHAPTER III.—HOW MR. HICKS GOT IT.

THIS passenger of ours had come on board, and was very pleasant and chatty with the captain now, for everything seemed to be smoothed

over, and they were the best of friends. Hicks this chap called himself; and after he had left the captain, he was pottering about everywhere that he wasn't wanted, and getting in our chaps' way till they was sick of him, and answered him fine and gruff—not as he seemed to mind, though, a bit; but poked about everywhere till he got down in the lower deck, where the mate was giving his orders; and then this Hicks began boring old Watts about our chaps—whether he thought this man honest, and that one to be trusted, and all on in that way, till I could see with half an eye that old Hammer-and-Tongs felt savage enough to kick him overboard.

Some of us was lowering down a water-cask, and this chap stood close aside the mate, who was giving the orders, when somehow or another the tackle slipped, and the cask came down on its head with a run; the top flew out, and the mate and this gold-digger, Hicks, got it beautiful. I'm blest if ever I see anything to equal it. Talk about a shower-bath! My, it was glorious! You should have seen that chap splash, and stamp, and kick about; and hear him storm and swear, looking all the world like a drowned rat; while old Watts, who had it worst, if anything, sat on a chest, and laughed until he was almost choked; and I had to hit him on the back—he being a stout man—to bring him to again.

"'Pon my soul, Mr. Hicks," he says, at last, as he sat wiping the tears out of his eyes, and every now and then bursting out laughing again, while all the time the water was streaming off him on to the deck—"pon my soul, Mr. Hicks, I beg your pardon; but you've been a'most the death of me."

Hicks didn't say anything; but he showed his big, white teeth like a savage dog, and gave the mate such a look—it was a look that seemed to say—

"I'll be quite the death of you, some day."

But he didn't say a word, only went off to the cabin, and sent a sailor ashore with a message; when one of his companions came from the hotel where they were stopping, and brought him some dry clothes, when he didn't stop hanging about us any more.

"Here, shove that empty cask in the corner there against the bulkhead," said the mate, as soon as my gentleman had gone, "head down, you lubbers, to keep it clean. Shove the bits inside, and the carpenter shall put it right when we're well afloat."

Next day, these men were all six of them on board along with the captain; and they had a table and chairs out upon the poop, and sat smoking, and drinking the captain's pale ale. And there they were, talking very big about what they had made, and what an encumbrance it was, and of how glad they should be to get it all on board safe under hatches.

I happened to be sitting on deck splicing and mending, and as they chose to come and sit down beside me, why I could not help hearing all their conversation, for they spoke pretty loud, and somehow I seemed to feel an interest in these men from the very first, and kept my ears well open.

"You see it's safe, I think, now, for they have it in the strong room of the hotel; but if you'll take it in your charge to-morrow, captain, it shall be

brought aboard, and we shall be glad to have it off our hands."

This was the black-bearded fellow, Hicks, that spoke; and then another chimes in—

"But the captain must be answerable, Hicks."

"Oh, yes, of course!" says Hicks. "But curse me, Phillips, if you aint the worst of us all. You'll have the yellow fever if you don't get rid of your share."

"That's all very fine," says Phillips; "but when a man has given life and strength almost to get together a bit of property, it isn't likely that he is going to part with it easily. Some people can bounce, I know; but if it came to the push, perhaps I could bear my loss as well as others. I know who were never too fond of the work."

"If you mean me by your dirty hints, Mr. Phillips," says Hicks, showing his teeth, "it aint so very far to the shore, and I dare say we can find a spot quiet enough to settle our differences. 'Taint my fault that we haven't shared and squared long enough ago."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the captain, "take it coolly. Let me fill your glass, Mr. Hicks; yours too, Mr. Phillips. I'll join you, gentlemen. Here's to a pleasant voyage home!—though I ought to apologise for asking you to drink toasts in bottled beer."

"Best drink in the world for a hot climate," says Hicks; and then they all seemed to be good friends again directly, and began about the gold once more.

"I wonder you did not turn it into notes," says the captain. "There they are snug in your pocket-book, and nobody a bit the wiser."

"What's the good of doing that, and shying away enough to pay one's passage home, almost? Why, we can make that by selling it in the old country instead of here."

"What is it in?" says the captain.

"Three cases—government pattern," says Hicks, "all regular and in style. And now, Phillips, old boy," he said, reaching out his hand, "I must beg your pardon; for really, captain, without being too squeamish, I'll be hanged if it isn't always like a nightmare on us."

Then Phillips and he shook hands very solemnly, and had some more bottled ale.

"You know, captain," says Hicks, "we've had more than one fight for it, and one man had four inches good measure of that in his ribs for trying to meddle with what didn't belong to him."

And as he said that he pulled out a nasty-looking knife, as I could see the gleam of as he gave it a bit of a flourish.

"Ah," says another, "I made my mark on a loafer with that too one night; and the noise seemed to startle him, for he jumped slap up in the air for a good yard, and then went down on his face and never moved again."

And as the chap said that—Phillips, I think it was—he pulled out a revolver; and from what else I heard and saw I found that they were all armed.

"I tell you what it is, captain," says Hicks; "we'd one and all shed every drop of blood there is in our veins sooner than be choused out of that bit of gold

after the years of toil, and struggling, and danger we've gone through. And that's natural, now, isn't it, captain?"

"All right, gentlemen, all right," says the captain. "I don't wonder at what you say; and I suppose there is a sad lot over here, what with convicts, and the roughs come from the old country and America, attracted by the gold."

"Rough, sir?" says Hicks. "No man could conceive what characters there are over here. I believe, sir, that there are men out here as would be guilty of any crime."

"Well, for the matter of that," says the captain, drily, "you'll find them anywhere."

"Oh, yes," says Hicks; "but not such double-dyed scoundrels as there are here. I can assure you, captain, that I haven't known what it is to pass a night in peace while I've been here; and since this gold has been ours, why, it's ten times worse. You see, out of a hundred men who go digging, not more than one has really good luck. Plenty of men find the gold; but then they must live, and the prices we have to pay up there are something staggering. We got on well, as you know, but not till we'd been working for bare bread a couple of years, when we sloped off, and hit upon a lucky spot, and prospered."

"But," says Phillips, "every one says we had out-and-out luck."

"Oh, yes," said Hicks, "out-and-out."

"Well, gentlemen," says the captain, "may you live to enjoy it! I don't wonder at your fear and suspicions, and cannot but applaud all you say; but my crew almost to a man is English—none of your beggarly coolies or lascars; so I think I may venture to say you will be pretty safe. Wind and weather permitting, I'll see you all right into Liverpool docks; and if I don't, it shall not be my fault."

Then they sat drinking another bottle or two of pale ale, and went ashore.

Tom Everard had come alongside me, and heard the last part of what was said; and then he began shaking his head and muttering to himself, but he would not tell me why.

That night, as we lay in our hammocks, it was so hot that we could neither of us sleep; for not a breath of air seemed to come between decks, and no wind-sail had been rigged up. I got talking about the gold, and these swell fellows as were coming on board; and I says to Tom—

"Tell you what, old boy, if I'd got a chest of gold I don't think I should go crying out, 'Look'e here!' even if I had a six-shooter with which to take care of it. I'd mark it as lead, or copper, or something of that sort."

"Gammon!" says Tom; "who goes travelling with a box of lead, or copper, or anything of that sort? That wouldn't be no good."

"Well, then, I'd have it in a lead coffin, and pretend as it was a corpus," I says.

"Yes," says Tom, "that would be the dodge. You'd do it then; for the first dark night as there was a storm some of the chaps would swear it was unlucky, and shove it overboard. How then, old chap?"

I never could argue with poor old Tom, for he was

a clever chap, and always got the better of me. So of course I had nothing to say to that; and as I had no gold of my own to bother about, and was not likely to have, I turned over in my hammock and tried to go to sleep; but I could not, for



thinking about that Hicks: half-sleeping, half-waking, there he always was, staring at me with a queer, wild, fierce look out of those eyes of his; and once I started up and began wiping my face, for it seemed to me that I felt his blood spurt all over it, and I lay down again wet with the heat. Then again it all came—that fierce face with the wild look, and the eyes seeming to burn into mine; till at last I went right off into a soft, peaceful kind of sleep, and began dreaming about seeing angels in a sunshiny land; and they all had long, golden hair, black velvet hats with white feathers, and wore yellow kid gloves; while every now and then it seemed as if something musical kept breathing in my ear the words—

“Thank you, sailor!”

CHAPTER IV.—HOW THE PASSENGERS' GOLD CAME ABOARD.

THEY say that it does rain over there sometimes, and when it does come down, it's wash away and look out for yourself. Places that were long dry gullies full of dust and sand, turned into rushing rivers twenty feet deep, and the water carrying everything before it. I have been told of a case where the water rose sixty feet in four-and-twenty hours; but as I'm telling you all this, and I want you to have full belief in me, and not to think as I'm romancing, I've cut that down and said twenty feet. But though I didn't see any of these rain-storms out there, I've seen their dust-storms, and I was quite satisfied; for of all the hot, dry, dusty places I ever see, that Sydney's the worst.

We were pretty nigh ready for sea now, and had got things made nice and snug—far better than when we were coming out, for you see the cargo and passengers' traps had come in quietly and all regular like, not in a regular harum-scarum bull-rush sort of a way, all at once, nearly driving the mate mad, but quietly and regular, as I said before.

That very next day comes our six passengers, with a great deal of fuss, and a truck and a couple of policemen, to bring their three little chests aboard; for their luggage—and not much of it neither there wasn't—came on board some days before, all except a little carpet-bag or two, which they carried in their hands.

It did seem such a hullabaloo to make about three little boxes, that as we took them on board some of us couldn't help having a little bit of chaff about it among ourselves; and precious savage the six passengers looked whenever a joke went flying round. You see, they weren't gentlemen, but the sort of fellows that I set down in my own mind as being almost sure to go on the loose as soon as they got home, and spend all they had in a couple of months; and so I told Tom Everard.

Once their treasure was on board, we did not see much of our six gentlemen till the day of sailing; and it would have been one of the greatest blessings that ever came to pass in this world if we had never set eyes on them again. We had all Major Dean's luggage on board—for that, you know, was the name of the old officer as had the two daughters—and just at the last, when we were getting up the anchor, after lying away from the wharf a couple of days, the Major came off with the two ladies in the same boat with our captain.

There was a whip rigged up of course, and I managed to get to the gangway, and was going to help the young ladies on board as they were slung up; but just as the fair one came up the side, that black-bearded chap, Hicks, starts forward, shoves me out of his way, and, taking off his hat, holds out his hand. But I wasn't sorry to see her just lay her little glove lightly upon his arm for a moment, and then bow stiffly, and take her father's arm, quite turning her back on my gentleman, and then giving



me—me, you know, a common sailor—a friendly nod, as much as to thank me all the same, though I did not help her; but she saw me go forward to try.

And very nice that seemed to come, I can tell

you; for when that Hicks shoved me back, it was as if some one had rubbed all my fur up the wrong way; while, when I got that smile and nod, it was like a hand smoothing me down again; though for a good five minutes I felt as if I should have liked



to have pitched that chap neck and heels over the bulwarks.

Being so much put out myself, I had not taken much notice of the Major; but I noticed one thing—something that Tom Everard noticed too—and that was how black the old gentleman looked when he saw who were going to be passengers. But he did not say anything; while, though I thought of it all, I remember calling to mind that they had their own cabins, and a servant lass of their own, so that only when they came on deck were they likely to see the other passengers. And that brings me to the servant lass they brought on board with 'em—a little clean-run, bright-eyed girl as you'd wish to see; and her Mr. Hicks let me help on board, for he stood watching the Major and his two girls as they went along the deck; while once after, when the fair young lady turned her head and saw me bringing her maid along, she smiled and laughed.

I had no time to do more then than just carry a few little packages into the cabin with the maid, who was very civil and pleasant; for old Hammer-and-Tongs was letting-go at us all like fun. The anchor was apeak, and more sails were being shaken out; and, almost taking the work out of the pilot's hand, old Watts was just in his glory. He did swear that day, and no mistake! For he was one of those old-school sailors who thought they could not get on without. I don't believe he meant any harm; but Lord bless you, how he would go on! It was like a thunderstorm out in the hot belts—thunder and lightning, thunder and lightning, till the bit of work was done. And then he'd stand there, rubbing the perspiration off his old bald head, and dabbing himself, and smiling, and "Werry well done, my lads—werry well done, indeed," he'd say. And this day, he turns round to Major Dean, who was standing close by—

"Smart bit of seamanship," he says—"werry smart, wasn't it?"

"Well," said the old Major, "really, I'm no judge;

but I must say," he said, very stiffly, "that I thought the men were doing wrong, by your being so angry with them, and er—and er—making use of such strong language."

"Angry, sir?" says old Watts. "Angry! Why, Lord bless you, I wasn't angry. I never saw the lads do it better."

And he looked so surprised and innocent that our captain could not help laughing.

"It's a way of his he has got into," says our captain.

"Oh, indeed!" says the Major, with his face a bit screwed up. "Then I hope he will not often have that way of his on when my daughters are on deck."

And then he walked aft.

Our captain cocked his eye, and grinned at old Watts; and the old chap twisted up that weather-beaten, mahogany face of his till it looked like an old carved figure-head. And then he blew out his cheeks, and, turning to the captain, he says—

"I must turn over a new leaf. But, I say, that was rather hot, wasn't it?"

"Well," says the captain, "you were letting go rather."

"Pon my soul, I didn't know!" says old Watts in a whisper. "I s'pose I've got in the habit of doing it, you know, and I must drop it. Here, confound it all!" roared the old man, rattling off into a regular string of oaths, "what are you up to, you sir? Who ever saw a rope coiled down like that? You swab, you, to come and ship yourself for a f'remast hand, and then set to work over a bit of two-inch as if you were stirring the ship's coppers! There, get out o' the way, you black swab. Here, you Jack Law, come and show the galley-dabber how to do it."

The captain was leaning against one of the ship's boats and laughing heartily; and as I went up and began coiling down with the regular swing, for the life of me I couldn't help laughing too; while the black—a great, broad-shouldered chap as the mate



had shipped only the day before to fill up the place of a man who was ashore sick and not able to be moved—the black chap grinned and showed his teeth viciously at all of us, as I laid the bit of hemp down in regular rings, dividing my time between

looking at the rope and that black chap's opal eyeballs as he rolled them about in their sockets.

"When shall you turn over the leaf, Watts?" says the captain, drily.

The old chap gave himself a regular slap on the side of his head, and stood looking at the captain till he had done laughing, when they, too, went aft.

Homeward bound, with our blood beginning to dance once more as we were out on the wide sea. Sick of shore, I was; and as for Tom Everard, it was quite a treat to see how he brightened up and laid to at the work, looking that cheery as I had not seen him look for weeks past. More than once I used to joke him about a pair of black eyes as there were in the ship; but as he did not seem to like it, I gave over.

We'd two or three more passengers on board besides those in the best cabin and the gold-diggers: there was a Scotchman and his brother, and a smart lad of about eighteen, his son; and after getting out two or three days, they began to come on deck; for the weather, from having been rather fresh, had settled down fine and bright. And I don't know how it was, but the day seemed to come on brighter and brighter as I saw the old Major come up out of the cabin with his two daughters, and begin walking up and down.

They all nodded pleasantly to me when I was near them once, and then they said something to old Watts.

"A fair breeze and a flowing sheet, Hope at the helm, and all the rest of it; and what more do you want, ladies?" he said, cheerily. "Here we go scudding along, and nothing to wish for but just a little more wind; while as to danger, why, love and bless you! I always feel a deal safer afloat than I do ashore, where sailors aint never any business to be at all."

The old chap then nodded encouragingly to the young ladies, as much as to say, "Don't you be alarmed, you've nothing to be afraid of while I'm here;" and then he rolled towards the side, took a look-out to windward, and sprinkled the sea with a little tobacco-juice, after which he rolled back towards where the captain had just come on deck.

"She'll stand a couple more stunsails aloft there, Watts," says the captain; and soon after the light canvas was spread to the wind, sheeted home, and the good old ship careened over to leeward as she felt the breeze, while the water went foaming and lapping by our bows, leaving an ever-widening track on the bright blue water.

All at once I turned my head, and saw that three or four of our gold passengers were on deck, where they had showed very little since we started, perhaps for some reasons of their own; for as far as I could hear they had none of them been sick, not to signify; while now, as they walked up and down once or twice, it seemed to me that their appearance was the signal for the Major to lead his daughters down below, where they went directly; when, you'll think it stupid, but I seemed to feel low because they were gone, and turning round sharp, there was that black messmate of mine a-grinning at me and rolling

those pretty eyes of his, while his face seemed to say, "Look out for squalls, matey, or you may go overboard some dark night."

CHAPTER V.—HOW MR. HICKS WENT OVERBOARD.

A FINE breeze as ever blew homeward, and the good ship bent to it with every stitch of canvas set; and away we went through the blue water, sending it behind us covered with white foam. And now for days past we had seen nothing but blue sky and blue sea, all bright and glorious, with the sun pouring down and lighting up the depths, so that you could watch the fish at times darting across the ship's course, or keeping beneath her bows.

As we got farther from the port the passengers seemed to get settled down, or, as our captain called it, became better shook together, and did what they could to amuse themselves, my friends the gold-diggers wanting to be very sociable with everybody. But the Major and his daughters seemed somehow to keep on one side, and to say, "No, you don't belong to our set." And yet we sailors couldn't feel to find fault with 'em, for there was always a smile and a pleasant look for us.

Poor old Watts used to scratch his head, though, and growl, and he was always breaking out into a string of swearing, and then chopping it off short, for he said that the new men we had shipped were worse than nothing; while the black fellow, Robinson—Rob, as we got to call him—was the worst of the lot. But the old mate was a good-hearted old chap, and in spite of his noise and roughness made the best of things, so that he was pretty well liked by the passengers; while, when there was no duty going on, he was always ready with a yarn.

On a long voyage the passengers snatch at anything for amusement, and one day, being calmish, a shoal of bonito was seen playing round the ship, when everybody was on the look-out to catch some of them. Lines were thrown out, and a harpoon or two got ready, and the old Major was going out under the bowsprit to try and strike a fish; but seeing Hicks coming forward to where the young ladies were standing, the old gentleman suddenly altered his mind, and threw the tackle upon the deck.

Next minute, with a bow and a smile, Mr. Hicks had hold of the line and fixed it round his wrist, and then, taking the harpoon, he made his way out on to the stay, and perched himself ready for a fly at the fish; while some of our chaps, who had not forgotten about the water-cask, hung round grinning and ready to give a little chaff when they dared.

"Don't suppose I shall do it the first time," says Hicks, putting himself into what he seemed to think a very graceful position, and looking towards the bows of the ship; when I could not help grinning to myself, for the Major and the young ladies had walked away to where Tom Everard and old Watts were in the mizen-chains having a try.

I saw Hicks look black—leastways he always did look black, but he looked now as if some one had given him another touch of the brush—and then he made ready.

"Lord love you, you'll do it, sir," says one of

the chaps. "Keep the line clear, and watch your chance."

"Now then, sir," says another, "here they come; give it 'em sharp."

"Hooray!" says another; for just then Hicks sends the harpoon down into the sea with a rush, about two feet behind the nearest fish's tail; while he looked up as savage as could be, as he altered his position on the stay and began coiling in the line once more.

"Try again, sir—you'll do it," says some one.

And then there was a roar of laughter; and as Hicks looked up, and saw me grinning like the rest, he seemed for a moment as if he was going to send the harpoon at me, he looked so vicious.

"Never saw a better throw made," says one chap, a regular fellow for his joke; "never did nowhere—that is, you know, without hitting anything."

"Mind you don't get hit, my man," says somebody, in a low tone.

And looking round sharp, there was one of the gold-diggers, the one they called Phillips—a sandy fellow he was, with no-coloured eyebrows and ginery beard, which gave him a foxy look; and though I thought nothing of it then, I've thought a good deal since, and been able to see into the millstone that was just ahead of us.

Hicks made ready again, and he had not long to wait for another chance; for two or three fish darted by, and then down went the harpoon, and, either by good aim or by lucky chance, right into one of the fish's backs, when the poor thing darted about here, there, and everywhere in its endeavours to escape.

"Hooray!" shouted the men. "Hold 'im tight, sir; stick to the stay, sir, or he'll pull you in. Take both hands to the line, sir; he's only dying game."

But there was no need to tell Hicks to hold on; for he had hold of the rigging tight enough with one hand, while, the line being made fast to his wrist, there was no fear of the fish getting away, though it tugged hard; and I could see the line cutting into his skin as the fish rushed about.

I remember that I was excited as a good big boy, and took interest enough in the capture, now that a fish had been struck; but at the same time, that Hicks puzzled me, for he kept on asking if this rope would bear him, and if that one was safe to hold on by, while all the time he picked his way under the bowsprit as if he quite knew what he was about, and had been there before.

Last of all the struggles of the bonito grew more weak; and then Hicks, with one arm round a rope, began to haul in slack, till the line tightened more and more, and he hauled out a good-sized fish.

"Take hold on him just by the tail, sir," says the chap who made a laugh before; "you can grasp him there." And he spoke quite in earnest, for just where the great fan-tail spreads out the fish is very small round. "Stick to him, sir," he says; "he aint so werry slippery."

"Shut your mouth up, my friend," says Phillips, in a sort of loud whisper; and our chap couldn't have liked the look he got, for he shuffled a little farther off, and then did what he was told, for he did not say another word.

Just then Hicks had got tight hold of the fish, and

was picking his way back under the sprit, easy enough to all appearance, but somehow it seemed to me that he was shamming; and he blundered the harpoon in his way once, and then put his leg through the wet line; then he slipped a little on the rope; and all seemed to me on purpose. And so it seemed to some one else, for just then some one leans on my shoulder as I was lounging over the bulwarks, and a voice says in my ear—

"Them's rum antics, Jack Law, for a chap to play."

I looked up, but didn't say anything; for it was Tom Everard come to have a look at the catch.

Like a good many very clever folks, though, Hicks over-did it; for though he wanted seemingly to make out that he was a thorough landsman, he bungled it; and all at once, when he was about a couple of yards off where he meant to climb up, the fish gave a very sharp wriggle—so sudden a struggle, that in his efforts to keep it Hicks missed his hold, and down he went after the fish with a heavy splash in the sea, while the ship glided slowly on under the light breeze, as if meaning to leave him behind, and that's where he ought to have been left; and what put what followed into me, I don't know. It was a fool's act, but I couldn't help it; and even if I could have seen in one quick flash all that was going to happen in time to come, I can't help thinking that I should have done just the same, for at such times I don't think a man is quite master of himself.

"Man overboard!" was the cry, and people rushed along the side; while just then I heard a shriek, and looking round, there stood the Major's daughter with her hands clasped, and such a look of horror on her beautiful face—a look that I saw more than once after, and can see now whenever I like to put my old tarry fist before my eyes.

Can ladies' eyes speak? I think they can. Those eyes seemed to speak to me then as they caught mine, and to say quite plainly, "Save him! O, save him!" I read them so, at all events; and as the people were making a rush for the nearest boat, I nodded to her—the fair one, I mean; not her sister, Miss Maude—and shooting by the people, shoving them here and there, and opening my big clasp-knife as I went, I ran along the deck, up on to the poop, and went overboard like a flash, holding my knife in my teeth, ready to cut the line in case the harpooned fish were tugging at it, and bearing the drowning man down.

For he was drowning fast, and no mistake, not being able to swim a stroke. But there, it was easy enough, and I was alongside of him in no time, dodging behind him, and keeping him at arm's-length, or else he'd have grappled me, and done for both in his struggles. But I managed to keep his head above water, and paddle about, waiting till the boat could pull to us, though they were a terrible while lowering her down, as is always the way when there's any confusion. Once or twice I was obliged to let him go, for he had no nerve, and fought at me desperately; while, when he saw me coming at him with the open knife, he must have thought I meant murder, for he quite shrieked out. But I did not cut the line, the fish being dead beat; and when I was

getting nearly tired the boat came up, with old Watts and the Major in it, as well as a crew, and we were hauled in, and they pulled to the ship's side; and then a whip had to be sent down to our harpooning friend, who was white as a sheet, and no



doubt found himself too heavy to climb the side in consequence of having swallowed so much salt water.

The lads cheered as I went all dripping up the side, taking the fish with me; but I was on the lookout for a word or a smile from somewhere else. And I got it, too, though the look seemed a glistening one, and as if there was a tear in the young lady's eye; and somehow I felt sorry for what I had done, and couldn't tell why.

"What did the Major say, Tom?" I says, as I was down below putting on some dry canvas, while my mate sat on his chest cutting a quid of tobacco.

"There, what odds what he said?" says Tom, surlily. "Only foolery. Said he always thought you a true man. But it's my belief, Jack Law, as you've put your foot in it. That chap wasn't wanted on board, and for the good of all concerned Davy Jones put his mark on him, when you must be so confounded 'ficious and go and fetch him back. Just you look out, my lad, and see as the number of your mess aint taken instead."

"Aint you got nothing else to croak about?" I says, laughing.

"P'raps I have," says Tom; "but, mind you, if that aint the worst day's work you ever did, Jack, in your life."

"Can't help it now," I says; "anyways it's done; and I'd have done more than that if I'd been wanted to, so now then; and I'd take it friendly if you'd drop the subject, Tom Everard."

"And I'd take it friendly, Jack Law, if you'd act like a mate, and keep yourself to yourself, and not be making yourself quite so free with a certain party aboard," says Tom, fiercely.

"Why, what do you mean?" I says, colouring up like a gal.

"Why," he says, sulkily, "it don't look the thing, Jack, for some one to be coming and talking to you for an hour together when it's your trick at the wheel."

"I didn't ask her to come, and I didn't want her," I says; "I wished all the while she'd go."

"Don't tell no lies, Jack Law," he says, hotly, "or you'll have my fist in your teeth."

"Who's telling lies?" I says, just as hot; for I felt savage. "I couldn't help the gal coming, and I didn't like the young ladies to come by and smile when they saw us talking together. I didn't like it, Tom Everard; and as to your fist, p'raps you might hurt it, my lad, so keep it to yourself."

"You're a liar and a humbug, Jack," he says.

And the next moment we two, being alone on the lower deck, were hard at it, only I got the upper hand of him; and as I was sitting on him, keeping him down, I seemed to see like with a flash what it all meant, and I felt sorry for the poor chap as was raging jealous of me, and was heaving and tossing under me like mad; when he had no cause to be, for I had wished the little servant-lass to go a dozen times over, when the night before she stood talking about home and the sea; though when she began to speak about her young ladies, Miss Mary and Miss Maude, I did get interested, and I suppose that's when Tom saw me.

So, "Tom," I says, but he wouldn't answer; but I could hear his teeth gritting together as he heaved up and nearly sent me off him. "Tom," I says, "wish I may die this minute, old man, if I ever said a soft word to the gal."

He didn't answer, but he lay quite still.

"Never thought anything of the kind, matey," I said—"never once. I didn't, Tom; and now I've told you the truth; so do what you like, and be hanged to you!"

And then I slipped off him and let him get up, when with one bound he sent me up against the bulkhead, and kept me there.

Now, I don't know whether I am a coward or not, but it was precious hard work keeping my



hands off him then, and letting him think I wasn't man enough to tackle him; but I swallowed it all down, expecting every moment he'd hit me, but he didn't. And after a few minutes, he said in a sort of a hiss—

"Say 'Strike me dead this minute if it aint true.'"

"Strike me— No, I won't say it," I says; "and if you can't believe your old mate without that, Tom Everard, why, you won't with. Damn the gal," I says—"I don't want her, and I don't care if I never see her again."

Tom never spoke, but he took his hands off me, and there he was, ever after, I could see, watching me always; while, whenever she could get a chance, this girl—and a nice, pleasant-spoken lass she was, sweet and innocent-looking as could be—whenver she could get a chance, she'd come and ask me questions, and I'd answer some of them, and then tell her to ask Tom Everard others. But she wouldn't, but seemed afraid of him; and no wonder, for he'd go about the deck looking black as thunder, but keeping near me all the time. While, though I did all I could to help him, it didn't seem no good, and Tom and I hardly spoke, though the things I put up with from the poor chap were very hard to bear sometimes; but I can say now that after that bit of an upset 'tween decks I never said a word to that poor lass that I wouldn't have had Tom hear me speak. God rest 'em! I wonder whether they've met again in the happy land! But my mate saw it all clear before his number was called.

CHAPTER VI.—HOW JACK LAW SMELT A RAT.

THINGS go on very quietly aboard ship so long as the wind keeps fair: it's ease her a point or two off, or take in or make sail, else there's very little change. Emma Rouse—that was the maid—used to manage to speak to me every day, whether I liked or not; and so I used to hear how the young ladies were. But I did not see much of them, for they did not come on deck often, only when they came for a walk with their father. For after the first day or two they never came on deck alone, on account, as I took it, of that Hicks, and the long fellow they called Phillips—a chap as used to make me savage to see what a wonderfully good opinion he had of himself; and, along with this Hicks, he never let a chance go by of trying to make himself agreeable to the ladies.

Now these young ladies did all they could, going through all those little things that well-bred folks know so well how to manage, so as to keep people at a distance—such as giving these chaps cold answers, and in all sorts of ways showing them as their company wasn't wanted—though to every one else in the ship they were always pleasant. But it seemed of no use: the gold-diggers would not take the hints; and they showed themselves so forward at last, that the ladies hardly showed at all, which made me mad, for I seemed to know all about it, and couldn't do anything to help it. Then my gentlemen must try it on with the father when he came on deck to smoke his cigar; for they were always sitting about smoking, and drinking bottled beer. Now they'd ask him to take a glass with them; another time to take a cigar; but as far as I saw, and Tom Everard told me in the times when he got a little more friendly—for he seemed obliged to talk sometimes—the Major, always as civilly as could be, said "No," and showed them that he belonged to a different class—wanting to keep himself to himself.

But that didn't suit our gentlemen, who, on the strength of having all that gold, wanted to be equal with everybody; and this Phillips must be always borrowing a light of the Major, and walking aside him on the deck, turning when he turned, and, of course, wanting to get introduced and on friendly terms with the young ladies; and so thick-skinned he was, that he either could not or else would not see how he was being snubbed, while more than once I've seen the grey-haired old gentleman go down into his cabin quite vexed and angry.

And yet the Major wasn't proud, for there was a fine high-bred courtesy in him; and when Tom Everard and I have had the watch of a night, he'd come and give us a cigar apiece—beauties, too—and stop for long enough, chatting as free as could be, and telling us of battles he'd been in out in India, and of how he was going home now to be near the children of a dear old friend as fell fighting at his side. And I turned quite sick and strange one night when he dropped a sort of hint about his old friend's son, and said something about his daughters, for I felt what he meant; though it was no business of mine, you know, being a common sailor. And it was just the same, you know, with the Major when either of us had our trick at the wheel; while as for him and old Watts, after that bit of a fly the first day, they were as thick as thick, and the old mate cracked many a bottle of wine with the Major in his cabin, as I know; and the old chap never let out but once afterwards before the ladies, and then he brought himself up short with a spank in the mouth. Tom told me as he went and begged pardon afterwards; but though I know he went down to the cabin, I can't quite think it was for that.

Seems strange to me, this does, bringing up out of the past all these dead and gone people—to bring up their faces, and think of their ways and words; to keep seeing again their last looks, and thinking of how suddenly death came upon them when not expected, and me left to tell the tale. And then thinking of it all, it seems as if I was a humble instrument set to do a great deal in a way of duty; and I did it to the best of my power, I think—leastways I tried.

One lovely evening, when there was one of those bright sunsets as turns everything—sea, sky, ship, and rigging—into gold, Miss Dean and Miss Maude, which was the dark-haired sister, were both on deck, for the unpleasant party were all below in the captain's cabin, and talking a good deal, so Tom said, for he was not quite so chuff that day. Tom knew, for he was quite alongside the skylight; and he said they were talking about where we were, and seeming to know a good deal about latitude and longitude, and all that sort of thing, that you expect sailors to be well up in, and no one else; for what has a landsman got to do with charts, and bearings, and observations?—nothing at all, you'll say.

Something seemed to have made Tom Everard more civil to me that day; and he comes up in a quiet confidential way, and he says—

"They aint half bad sailors, Jack; but it strikes me as they're a queer lot, and I don't half like the

looks of 'em. Captain does, though, for they're awfully thick; and they've got the chart out there, and the skipper seems to me a'most tight, and he's brogging about on the chart with the compasses, and making holes, and showing them where abouts we are."

"Who's them, and who's a bad lot?" I says; for I was thinking of something else as I looked along the deck.

"Who's them?" says Tom; "why them gold-digger chaps. And do you know, Jack, I shall be precious glad when we lands our cargo—that is," he says in a sad way, "if we ever does land it."

"What a pair of handsome gals those are, Tom," I says, as I looked towards where the young ladies were standing, bathed in the golden light.

"Yes," says Tom, "and if I was their father, I shouldn't take it so coolly if that hook-nosed chap, Hicks, and 't'other long owry chap kept on follerin' 'em about."

"P'raps he don't know it," I says.

"Think not?" says Tom.

"P'raps they don't tell," I says, "so as to save making a rumpus; for I don't think their old man would stand much nonsense. I'm blest if I should like to upset him."

"No," says Tom, "more should I; he looks to me like one who could show fight. 'Member that story he told us about the retreat in Indy?"

"Ah!" I says, and then stopped.

"Look at that now," says Tom.

But I was looking; for just then, while we were talking, the two very chaps we had mentioned had come up on deck, when the first thing they did was to put themselves so as to meet the ladies, and smile and bow.

I saw Miss Maude press closer up to her sister, and as they went by they just slightly bowed, and then walked towards where Tom and I stood unlaying a bit or two o' rope; and then when they were pretty close to us they stood looking right out to sea.

But that did no good; for up comes my two gentlemen, and I could see that they had both been taking aboard as much as they could carry; and then one goes on one side of the sisters and one on the other, when they leaned down and looked right in their faces, and said something as made them start back and cross over to the other side of the deck; for I saw them glance towards the cabin and then turn off, for another of the gold party was standing smoking away close against the cabin-hatch.

"Steady, matey," says Tom Everard, getting tight hold of my wrist; for I was going to do something—I don't quite know what—but I felt all red-hot like. "Steady, matey; 'taint your business, Jack Law."

Well, I didn't see that, for if it aint a British sailor's duty to succour a maiden in distress, help the weak, and punish the wrong, why whose duty is it—tell me that? But after what Tom Everard said, I stood quite still, hoping that the father would come up.

"And if he does pitch 'em overboard," I says, thinking out loud, "why, 'ware sharks."

"Just what I was a-thinking, Jack," says Tom Everard.

I could see that the young ladies looked troubled and frightened, and Miss Dean—Miss Mary as she told me her name was—dropped her handkerchief on the deck, but turned directly to pick it up. That Hicks, though, was too quick for her, for he got hold of it same time as she did, and snatched it away, kissed it, and began stuffing it into the breast of his weskit.

I saw Miss Mary flush up, and I've never seen any one look so handsome since, for her bright eye seemed to flash as she says out loud, giving her pretty little foot an angry stamp at the same time—

"If you are a gentleman, sir, you will immediately restore that handkerchief."

"My angel," he says, "never! Now," he says, getting hold of her hand and drawing it through his arm, "don't be so cross; and yet I don't know—it only makes you look more handsome. Now, let's have a walk and talk it all over."

Miss Mary did not speak, but struggled hard to get away; and then, when I felt ready to go off, she turned her head towards me as if to ask for help, and though there was a good distance between us, our eyes met.

That was enough. I saw that she was too brave to scream out, but kept on making towards the cabin stairs, while her little sister, pale and frightened, was trying to follow her. But Phillips kept between 'em, and wouldn't let her pass; and, strange as it may seem on such a lovely evening, 'cepting the man astern there at the wheel there was no one else on deck.

That was enough for me. I shook Tom off and made a rush, but stopped half-way as Miss Mary made towards me. And I caught the little thing in my arms, so that she clung to me like a timid bird; and I could feel her panting and fluttering as she looked back and saw what I did, and that was send Hicks down like a bullock, to roll over stunned and bleeding on the white deck; while the next moment Phillips caught a lift under the ear as sent him staggering against the long-boat, when he tipped up, went in, and you saw his heels for a moment, and then he was gone.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

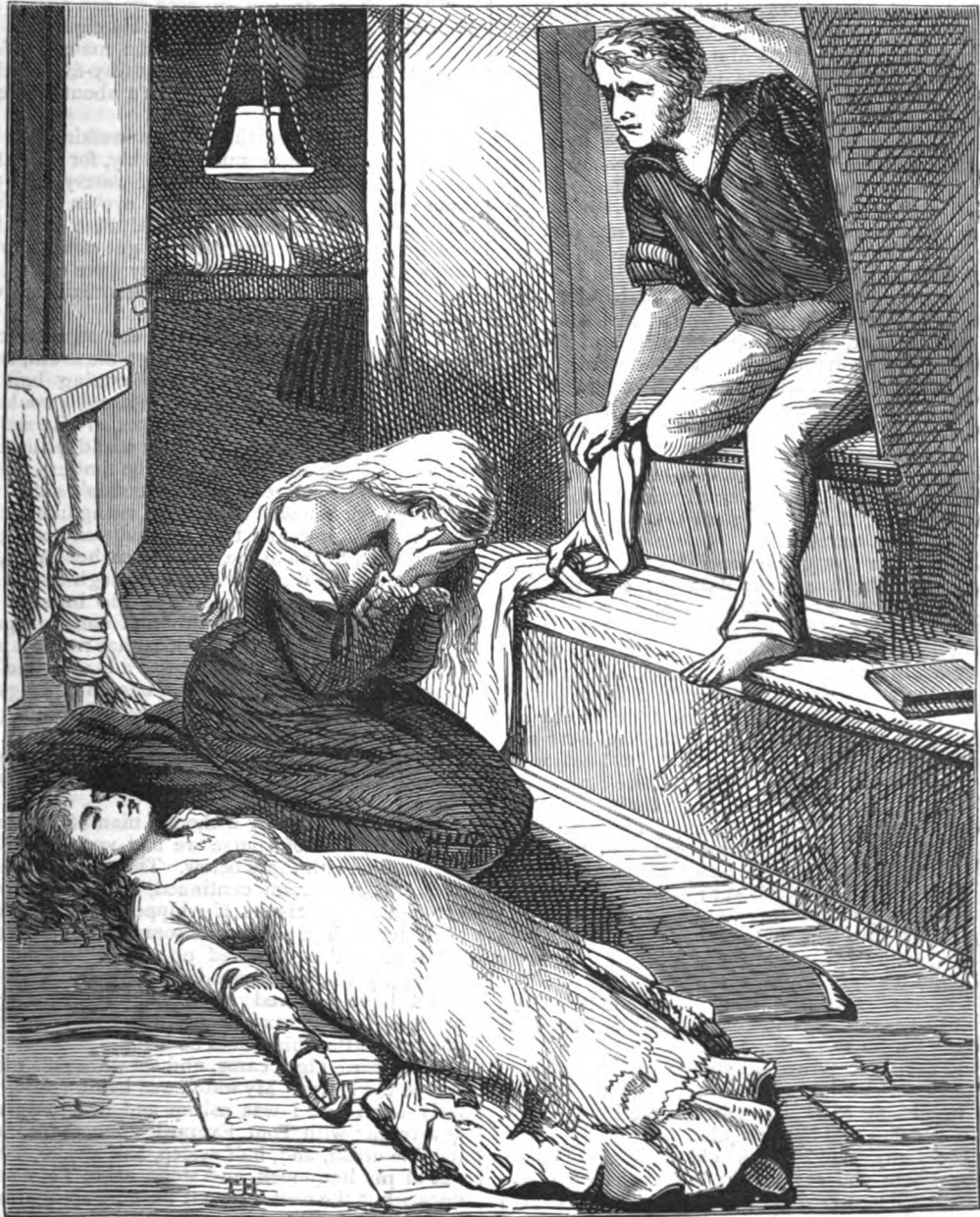
Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyl-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

THE LOG OF JACK LAW.

A NEW YEARS YARN.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.



"SANK DOWN BY THE SIDE OF HER SISTER."—(Page 26.)

The Log of Jack Law.

A NEW YEAR'S YARN.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER VII.—HOW NATURE BREWED A STORM.

TALK about a lion! why, the old Major's beard seemed quite to bristle, while the veins were all swelled and knotted across his forehead. He tried to speak to me, but he couldn't; so gave me a wag of the head to carry Miss Mary down, and I lifted her in my arms—light as a child she was—and I stepped along the deck with her, wishing some one would come in my way, or that I could fight for her, or do something; but she asked me to set her down directly, and then she took hold of my arm with both her little hands, while we followed the Major and Miss Maude down into the cabin.

As soon as they were all inside, I was coming away, when the old gentleman came up and shook me by both hands, and he says—

"I'll talk to you to-morrow, Jack Law," he says. "I thought I knew an honest face when I saw it."

I backed out, awkwardly enough, and feeling somehow quite ashamed of what I had done; when the last thing as I then saw was Miss Maude crying in her sister's arms; while, when I got back on deck, both of them gentlemen had taken themselves down below, and the only thing to show as there had been a bit of an upset was some blood on the white deck, which Tom Everard was swabbing up, grinning as he did it, while old Watts was looking on as black as thunder.

There was a pretty sharp row about that evening's upset, and I believe our captain made all the apology for it that he could to the Major; and I don't think the old soldier thought any the less of our captain, for they kept very good friends. But I never again saw the ladies on deck alone; while as for Hicks and his party—well, I have seen a few ill-looks pass in my time, but I never did see anything quite to equal some of them as were sent from that party after the grey-headed old Major.

"And how long will it be before we see land again, Mr. Watts?" says Miss Mary one evening.

"Land, my dear child?" he says, looking at her admiringly, as if she was some beautiful little toy, and taking his hat off while he spoke to her—"land, my dear child? Why, not yet awhile; and what do you want to see land for? Haven't you got a fine ship under your feet, and the beautiful blue waves dancing round you, while the soft breeze races you along gloriously?"

"Oh, yes," she said, laughing; "but it will be nice to be ashore once more; and besides," she said softly, "I want to see England."

And then she turned very quiet and thoughtful; and as I was sitting sail-making on the deck, I began wondering what she wanted to see England for, and I felt dull and heavy again.

"Bless my soul!" says old Watts. "Shore, shore, where you see naught but trees and grass; stumpy willow-trees, looking like pegs stuck in a green cloth; or tall skinny poplars growing up out of marshes, just as if the damp situation had sent them off into a consumption! Shore's all very well

just round the port where you land. But give me the sea. Why, your shore-goers never have a bit of peace of their lives for the lawyers, who have always been a bad lot, ever since that chap Tertullus accused Paul; and I do hope he never got his fee. Trust him, though; he wouldn't have begun without. Sea-lawyers are bad enough, but your land sharks are nailers."

"And where do you suppose we are now?" said the old Major, who was smoking his cigar.

"Where'bouts are we?" says the mate. "Why, we're in the South P'cific, in about fifty-five south by hundred and seventy west—that's about where we are."

The young ladies then began walking up and down with the Major rather briskly, for the afternoon was cold, and the sun looked watery. But they soon went below; and I kept my eye on old Watts, who was sniffing about as if he felt that something was going wrong. And then he got talking to the captain, when, from the looks they gave round, and the orders we had, it was very plain that they were doubtful about the weather.

There was no doubt about it; for as night came on down came the storm right from the south, bringing with it clouds of snow and cutting hail, and making the sea rise with a rush; and I could not help thinking, whenever I had time, of the state of those below, as I knew how they would be listening to the creaking and groaning of the timbers, and the dashing of the waves against the ship's side. Not but what she behaved beautifully, rising like a cork; and though now and then a heavy sea struck her, she seemed to shake the water from her sides, and bound over the waves. It got so rough at last, and we shipped so much water, that the hatches were battened down, and I had to nail some tarpaulin over the cabin skylights. Not as that made it much darker for those below, for it was a black time, and those southern storms are bitter ones to fight against. You see, you get so many of those blinding squalls of snow, when it seems to fall like a great sheet, lying thick upon the deck, till we'd ship a sea, when it would run down the scuppers in a cold sludge that made you shiver again.

That night went by without a man of us leaving the deck; and of course we had very little communication with those below. The next day passed, and still the storm continued, the ship plunging through the waters as if whipped and spurred by the waves. The next night some of us went below; for though there seemed no chance of the wind abating, yet things looked no worse, and no ship could have behaved more gallantly; and yet I never felt so uneasy before in a gale, nor felt so much as if the ship would be lost.

The third night came, and we were still running before the storm. My watch was below; and, regularly worn out, I was asleep and dreaming about quarrelling with Tom Everard, when there came a terrible crash, and, half asleep, half awake, I rolled out of my hammock, and stood aside Tom on the deck; but the next moment we were up against the bulkheads, for the ship was rolling terribly.

We weren't long getting on deck, when, going to the side and hanging on to the bulwarks, we found

that the mizen mast had gone by the board. The ship was lying rolling in the trough of the waves, and the sea sweeping the deck, so that it was every man for himself, and hold on by the life-lines.

Old Watts and the captain were holding on by the mainmast, and the mate hoisted a signal for us to go to him (for it was not dark, on account of the gleam from the waves); and as we got to them and held on, just as a wave came sweeping over us, I felt we must all have gone. Next minute, all spitting and sputtering, old Watts roars out to the captain—

"Where would your rudder have been now, if it hadn't ha' been for my double chains, hey?"

Then there was the shouting of orders, that were not half heard; the hurrying about of men, the shrieking and yelling of the wind, and the thundering of the water, so that you grew quite confused. Then there was a crash—not a loud one, for it was hardly heard in the din of the storm—and a great piece of the bulwark was torn away, and lay with the wreck of the mizen beating against the side. But old Watts and the captain were hard at work with axes, cutting stays and shrouds, when there came a rush, and the wreck lay nearly clear of the ship's side; but there was a great tangle of top-hamper hanging to her yet, while mast and yard beat and ground heavily against the ship's ribs, as if to break in a way for the waves. A few more strokes and another rush of ropes, and the ship was clear, and answered to her rudder; but as the wreck of the rigging darted over the side there was a faint shriek, and we all stood horrified for a few moments, as we saw that the places where two men stood the minute before were empty, while the sea around was one boiling cauldron that no boat could have lived in five minutes.

Days followed—days of wild storm—during which time two of the passengers were swept overboard, one being the Scotch lad I mentioned before.

"If it had been them gold-diggers, Jack," says Tom Everard, as he stood squeezing the water out of his hair.

"But it worn't, you see," I says.

And he shook his head and went on with his work.

Scudding along under bare poles, we were, day after day, wet, cold, and miserable. The captain never got a single observation, and all we knew was that we were racing away due north.

"Never mind, matey," says Tom; "there's plenty of room, and the storm can't get no worse."

But I didn't feel any the easier for that; and the only bit of comfort I had was when I was hard at work, so you may suppose in that bitter time I had plenty of that sort of consolation.

"It can't last for ever," says Tom.

And of course he was right, and the sea gradually went down, the sun came out, and after a day or two all was so warm and bright and clear, that you would hardly have believed in the change. Busy enough we were then patching up, and splicing, and getting up the best spar we could for a jurymast, so as to have a sail of some kind aft, to ease the steering; and then once more things seemed ship-shape. The captain got his observa-

tions, and Tom said he heard him with the gold-diggers in the cabin, showing them the charts again, and telling them what a many hundred miles to the northward we had run out of our course.

"They're precious anxious about that bit of stuff of theirs," I says. "What a stew they must have been in!"

But Tom didn't answer, only stood thinking; and I was thinking too the next minute, and very glad to see some people up on deck again in the warm sunshine, though they did look pale and anxious, and no wonder.

I never heard how far we had run to the north; but it was quite a different climate we were in now, people spending all the time they could on deck, while the awning, that had been taken down after we sailed from Sydney, was rigged up again; and Chipps getting on pretty well with his bulwark repairs, things did not look so much amiss, and the captain said, once we'd run through the cold again, and a calm came, the paint-pots should be brought out.

But that ship never saw paint again; for there was a storm brewing that only one of us foresaw, and before long it came upon us with a rush.

CHAPTER VIII.—HOW TOM EVERARD PROVED A TRUE PROPHET.

WE were a crew of twenty men all told; but two went overboard in the storm. Four of these men were fresh hands shipped at Sydney. And one night, when it was very still and calm, it being our watch, Tom and me leaned over the bulwarks together, talking quite low, and him in a sort of half surly, half friendly way, as if he didn't quite know what to do; for I wouldn't notice his queer ways. We were talking quite low; for Hicks's party was on deck, and had a table and chairs, and were smoking and drinking.

"Jack," says Tom to me all at once—for he was a deep, quiet chap, always thinking, and putting that and that together—"Jack," he says, "I didn't think we should have got through that storm."

"But we did, matey," I says.

"Yes," he says, "but I'm afraid there's another coming; and what makes me so savage is, as I can't feel sure."

"I'm dry, Tom," I says; "and if it was anybody else but them chaps drinking that bottled beer, and they said 'Take a glass,' I should have said 'Yes.'"

I talked like that to change the subject; for Tom seemed to have one of his croaking fits on him, and they didn't seem to do no good.

"Seen the little lass, Tom?" I says, pleasantly.

He didn't answer, but looked black as thunder at me for five minutes, and then walked across to the other side of the deck. But he came back after a bit, and he says to me, he says—

"Jack Law, there's something up."

"All right," I says, "what is it?"

"Them four chaps that shipped at Sydney," he says.

"Well, what about them?" I says. "They're regular swabs anyhow, 'specially that black feller."

"They're a bad lot," says Tom.

And just then Hicks's party got up, and began sauntering towards us.

"I watches my chance," says Tom, in the same tone of voice; "and as they drew him close up alongside, I let go at him with the lance, and had it



right in his back. Off he went again, and them paying out the line; but after a minute the spurt was over, and I had him again with another good thrust; and then they hauled him on board almost without a struggle."

"Eh?" I says; for I couldn't make him out.

"Keep quiet," he says, "they're a-coming back."

"You know," says Tom, going on again, "all you have to do is to look sharp and aim straight—any fellow can do it. When I was in the whaler—There," he says, "they're gone down now, and our watch is up; so let's turn in."

Only that I knew the other way, I should have said that Tom had been splicing the mainbrace; but I followed him down, and turned into my hammock next to his, hardly knowing what to make of him; for he didn't speak no more, and after lying thinking for some time—an hour, perhaps—I was dozing off to sleep, when Tom reaches over and gives me a shove.

"Now, I tell you what it is," he says; "there's something up, my lad."

"Well," I says, sleepily.

"How came them six gold-diggers to be so thick with them Sydney swabs—Rudd, and Johnson, and Brock, and that black lubber Robinson?"

"Why, they aint," I says; "I never saw 'em speak together once."

"No," he says, "that's it—that's the dodge and arfulness of the thing, and what sets me thinking. They do have a palaver together, now and then; and what makes 'em?"

"How should I know?" I says. "Why, what an old mare's-nest hunter you are, mate!"

"I've been reckoning of them up, Jack," he says, "ever since they've been aboard, and I know a little more than they think for; and now I only want to get one more knot undone before laying it

all before the skipper. Why, you're asleep, aint you?"

"No, I aint," I says, rousing up, for I had been next door to it.

"Well, I'll tell you what, Jack," he says; "they mean that gold—that's what they mean."

"What, their own? why, of course," I says, getting interested in spite of being sleepy; for somehow I took a good deal of notice of what Tom Everard said.

"No, no," he says — "the treasure; and I've worked it out in my own mind as them three chests they had brought aboard with so much row and bluster is nothing more than so many dummies. Now, then, what do you think of that, my lad?"

I was so took aback for a bit that I hardly knew what to think, but at last I says—

"What makes you think so?"

"Why," says Tom, "what do they want to be such good friends with them four chaps for when nobody else is there, and not know 'em when any one's looking?"

I didn't say anything, but kept following him, and trying to fit it all together, so as to show him that it was all nonsense, and he was making a bugbear.

"What do they always want to know so exactly where the ship is for, and get the captain carneyed up for, so as he marks her course on the chart, and tells 'em where this place lies, and that place lies?"

I couldn't say nothing to that, and he went on—

"What makes them pretend to know nothing about the sea, and yet always call every sheet and bit of tackle by the right name, and have their sea-legs as soon as they come on board?"

I couldn't speak for thinking, and I remembered how handy that Hicks was when he got down on to the bobstay, though he seemed shamming awkwardness all the time.

"I tell you what it is, Jack Law," he says, in a whisper, "it's my belief as there'll be a fight afore long, and maybe a change of skippers; and if so, the Lord ha' mercy on them there poor gals!"



"Tom, old man," I says, speaking with something seeming to rise up in my throat, "don't humbug, Tom," I says. "It aint a thing to joke about."

"Mate," he says, "there's fifty thousand pound worth of gold in that batch of little chests, so I hear,

and I think there's a plant been made; and what some chaps would do for—"

"What's the matter," I says in a whisper; for he had stopped short and seemed listening.

He didn't answer, but leaned over and clapped



his hand over my mouth; and of course I lay there in the dark, as still as could be, listening.

After a minute or two he takes his hand away, and he whispers—

"There's some devilment up, Jack Law; and I'm hanged, mate, if I don't think it's on to-night."

He spoke so huskily, and seemed so excited, that I could feel my heart go "thud, thud," like a pump.

"What is it?" I says.

"Mate," he says, "there was two of them Sydney chaps in the watch as relieved us; and when I stopped you, I know I heard some one stealing up the compaion-ladder, and—"

Tom's hand was over my mouth again for a minute, while I distinctly heard some one breathing hard, and a rustling noise as of some one going up on deck.

"That's the black," says Tom, in a whisper, "I could smell him."

"Phew!" I says, whistling softly, "what shall we do?"

"Let the skipper, or else old Hammer-and-Tongs, know."

"If we can," I says. For something struck me as if it was as Tom thought, we should be stopped; and slipping out of our hammocks very quietly, we stood listening in the dark as we hurried on our things.

"Ah!" says Tom, between his teeth, "if we can."

It don't take sailors long to dress, and it wasn't many moments before I says to Tom—

"Haden't we better rouse up these chaps?" For there were half a dozen within reach.

"No! wait a bit," says Tom. "Let's make sure; perhaps it's only a hum, after all."

So we stole along to the ladder, and as I was first, I crept up quietly, raised my head above the

combing of the hatchway, and looked round; but it was very dark, and I could not see anything in particular; so I crawled on to the deck and lay there waiting for Tom. He was aside me in a moment; and then, after crawling aft a bit and listening, we were beginning to feel rather foolish, and to think we had both of us better go down, when, as we knelt together close under the shelter of the long-boat, we heard a bit of a scuffle aft, and then there was a faint cry and a heavy plunge in the water, and then another cry, but fainter.

"Hush!" whispered Tom, nipping my arm; for there was a scuffle forward, too, and the sound of some one trying to shout with a hand pressed over his mouth. Then more scuffling; when, as I leaned forward, not knowing what to do, several dusky figures ran by us; and they were barefoot, for their feet went softly "pad-pad" upon the long, flush deck. Directly after there came another heavy splash in the water, and for a moment I felt as if I couldn't move.

"Come on," whispered Tom; and following him, we crept along by the bulwarks till we reached the cabin-hatch, when we darted down, stopping a moment to listen; for we heard them closing the hatch we had come up, and the sound that followed was, we knew, a cable being coiled upon it to keep it down.

The next instant we were at the bottom, when I was seized by the throat, and a voice I knew well enough growled,

"Who's this? What's the ship's course altered for?"

"Look out, Mr. Watts," hissed Tom. "Mutiny. They'll be here in a moment."

"Damn nonsense!" roared the old fellow, pushing by us and running on deck, when there was a sharp scuffle for an instant, and then he came stumbling back, and the cabin-hatch was banged sharply to.



CHAPTER IX.—HOW JACK LAW WENT OVERBOARD.

AS poor old Watts came blundering down the stairs again, Tom and I were banging at the captain's and Major Dean's doors; when out rushed the captain with his lamp, to see Tom holding up old Watts, with the blood running down his face, and him looking staring and wild.

"Why, what's the matter?" shouted the captain.

"Mutiny—Black Rob—beaten below!" gasped the old man.

"Mr. Watts, sir," groaned the captain, "I'll never forgive you. By G—d, sir, you've lost me the ship!—Here, hold him."

The captain said those last words to Tom, for the old man made a lurch forward, and nearly fell upon the floor.

"He was took unawares, sir," says Tom. "We had to run for it. They've pitched the man at the wheel and the watch overboard, sir—Mr. Harris, sir. We couldn't do anything, for there's about ten in it."

"Oh, here's the Major," said the captain eagerly, as the old gentleman came out with a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other. "Here, hold up, Mr. Watts. I beg your pardon, sir; I was taken aback."

He then slipped back into his cabin, and fetched out some brandy, which seemed to revive the mate, and we set him on a locker.

I hadn't spoken, but the old Major gave me one of his short sharp nods. And just then the captain brought out three cutlasses and some pistols; but he looked wild, and as if he hardly knew what to do.

"And now, captain," says the old Major, "what does it all mean?"

"I know no more than you, sir," says the captain, trying to make out what was going on up above.

"Well, you see, sir," says Tom bashfully, "I think it's a planned thing to get that gold; and them six chaps—"

He didn't say any more, for old Watts gave a bit of a groan, and then got up, showing his teeth viciously.

"Yes, that's it," he said huskily; "I can see through it all now."

"But you don't think those six passengers are in it?" says the captain pitifully, as if he didn't like to know that he had been taken in.

"Every mother's son of them," growled the mate, stretching out a trembling hand for more brandy, and then tying a handkerchief round his forehead to stop the bleeding.

"Papa—papa!" cried a voice from the inner cabin. And it sent a shiver all through me; while just then the pale face of the maid appeared, and she said something to the Major, who stepped back into the cabin, while I saw my mate Tom spit in his hand, and take a fresh grip of his cutlass.

As the Major came back the captain went into his cabin, and I heard him fumbling about for some time, while I stood anxiously listening on the stairs, expecting every moment that the hatch would be opened, and a rush would be made down upon us.

I caught one glance of the Major's face as he came back to his cabin door, and I could see his lip quivering, and a strange look in his face; but the next moment he seemed hard as iron, and met my look with a quiet encouraging nod and a smile. And it was then that there seemed a something in his face that reminded me of Miss Mary; while that very remembrance of her sent a quivering pain through me, for I thought at the same time of Hicks and Phillips; and I don't know how I looked just then, but I know I was grinding my teeth to-

gether, and feeling the blood in my eyes, as I tried the edge of my cutlass, and then the point, to find both as blunt as they possibly could be.

"I think they're on the stir," I whispered; and there was a bit of a movement amongst those below me, as I joined them.

Just then the captain ran to the Major and whispered something to him, when he drew the ramrod and tried his pistol, to find it empty; the next one he tried was the same.

"No powder?" he whispered to the captain.

"Not a grain, sir; it's been stolen."

"Trust to your steel, then," said the Major coolly, "and give point. Don't strike; there's not room. I cannot but think that a bold front will cow these fellows; but remember, please, that the women are in this way, and I need not tell you of what is an Englishman's first duty."

No one answered; but the Major smiled sadly as by the light of that swung lantern of the captain's he saw the quiet, determined look there was in the faces of those around him.

Tom rolled up his sleeve above the elbow, while old Watts seemed to get better and stronger every moment.

"Will it be best to meet them here?" said the captain, "or shall we try and barricade ourselves in the cabin?"

"No, no; let's have it out here," said the Major, "and we can retreat there if it is necessary."

"Yes," muttered old Watts in my ear, "and be shot from the cabin skylights. Good-bye; God bless you, Jack Law," he whispered; "I ask your pardon, if I've ever been too hard with you, for you were always a favourite of mine. We're something like rats in a hole, my lad; but make some of them feel your fangs before you die, for the sake of them poor gals."

He shook hands with me as he said that, and then his old face, all bloody as it was, turned stern and fierce.

"Asking your pardon, sir," says Tom to the captain, "but wouldn't it be almost better to make a rush at 'em all together?"

"I think not, my man—I think not," said the Major. "We are entrenched here, and can take them as they come; for only one can get down the stairs at a time."

Tom made a bit of a scrape, and took a fresh grip of his cutlass; and then we five stood in the dark, for the lantern was put back in the captain's cabin; while on each side of me I could hear heavy breathing, and now and then a hissing whisper.

Something was evidently going on up on deck, but it was impossible for us to tell what, though once or twice I heard the sharp, short tones of Hicks's voice as he gave orders.

All at once I heard voices just outside the cabin-hatch, and for the first time I felt afraid. I can hardly explain my feelings; but my knees trembled a little, and a cold sweat came out on my forehead, as it struck me that perhaps this was my last hour. But the feeling was gone directly, and my nerves seemed to tighten up, and I bit my lips; I was so savage with myself for my cowardice.

"Stand firm all!" whispered the Major.

And then the cabin-hatch was suddenly thrown open, and Hicks roared out—for I knew his voice well enough—

"Come up, Captain Porter."

There was a movement close by me; but the next moment a sharp voice hissed—

"Stand firm, sir!"

And I knew it was the Major who spoke.

"You two sailors," he then shouted down the hatchway—Hicks did—"you two sailors, come up, or it'll be worse for you!"

Tom gave a sort of growl, but no one spoke; and then there was another summons, followed directly after by seven or eight shots, which came crashing down, and I heard a groan or two; but what followed is a sort of misty confusion to me, though I can recollect the rush down the stairs of a lot of fellows, yelling like devils, and bearing all before them. I have a recollection of making two thrusts with my short cutlass, and then feeling a tremendous cut on the head, and falling; while the cabin-door seemed burst open at the same moment. Then I was down, with men stamping on me; but I was conscious enough to catch sight of the lights in the Major's cabin, and to see him cut one fellow down, and give point at another. Then I seemed to quiver and tremble all over with hearing the screams of the poor girls in the inner cabin; while at the same time came the sound of shots and blows on the captain's side, mingled with curses and oaths; and then all was still for a few moments, till I seemed to hear some one scream again, when more lights were brought, and I could see—as I lay between the stairs and the door—the poor old Major lying across a chair, as he had fallen, with his head and legs nearly touching the floor on both sides. Lying across me was either old Watts or poor Tom Everard, but I couldn't tell which; for all seemed to come over blank again, just as if there was nothing the matter, and I'd gone to sleep. The next thing I recollect is hearing Hicks's voice giving orders.

"Over with them!" I heard him say.

And then there was the sound of something heavy being dragged across the next cabin. And then something was drawn over my feet, and I heard, as it were, a head go bump, bump up the stairs, followed by a rustling, scraping on the deck, and a heavy splash in the water.

"That's the poor old skipper," I thought to myself, as I lay there with my eyes half-shut.

And just then some one walked over me, and right into the Major's cabin, and I saw it was Hicks.

"Serve this old beast the same," he says.

And then another walked over me, and then some one else, too, followed into the cabin; and I saw one was a gold-digger, as he called himself, and the other was Black Rob, who grinned and showed his teeth as he kicked the chair from under the poor old gentleman, and the body fell upon the floor; when there was a long wailing cry from the inner cabin, and some one beat at the door as if trying to get out.

"Silence!" roared Hicks.

And he hammered against the door with the butt-end of his pistol, when the cries ceased; and I

seemed to wonder how much longer my dream would last, and when I should wake, for I felt quite motionless. And so I lay as the black and the other scoundrel took hold each of one of the gallant old gentleman's legs, and dragged him along.

I caught one glimpse of his face, and saw what I believe was a bullet-hole right in his temple; while there was a cut right across his cheek, from which the blood flowed over his white beard.

Then, as I lay there, I felt the body drawn over me, and the warm blood drip on my face, and smear across it. Then came the bump, bump of the head upon the stairs, the creeping, rustling noise upon the deck, and then the splash told me as the poor old gentleman was gone.

As I was trying to explain before, just then I was in a sort of sleepy, dreamy state—half-witted, I may say. I had been able to see and hear all that passed; and yet it did not seem to concern me, for I was not at all in pain or fear. I remember thinking that my turn, or else Tom Everard's, would come next, while I seemed to feel that old Watts was lying in the captain's cabin. Then I felt lighter, and as if something had been dragged off me; but I didn't take much notice, for I was just then feeling sorry for those poor girls; when some one laid hold of my legs, and I was dragged up the cabin-stairs, across the deck, then there was a bit of a heave, and I felt the shock as I struck the water. And then it was as if new life rushed through me; for as I rose to the surface I struck out, and directly after felt the ship's side as it gently glided by me, and my fingers slipped over the slimy woodwork as I tried to find a hold.

CHAPTER X.—HOW JACK LAW DIDN'T DIE.

I SUPPOSE that one of the first things the mutineers did, and what poor Tom Everard and I heard, was to pitch the man at the wheel overboard; for when my turn came, the ship lay rolling in the trough of the sea very easily, and with hardly any way on her, for there was scarcely a breath of air. And very fortunate this was for me, for I was able to keep myself afloat as she gently forged by me, and then I got hold of the rudder-chains, and drew myself out of the water, sitting on the top one, but directly after I lashed myself to it with my handkerchief; and a good thing I did, for the next minute I turned dead sick, and nearly slipped back into the water. But somehow or another, in a half stupefied way, I managed to cling where I was, and I remember giving old Watts a blessing for his whim, which gave me a double hold instead of a single one; and I twisted my legs well round the bottom chain, which slackened or tightened as the rudder played a little one way or the other. And there, ever so far below the cabin windows, I hung, drenched with the sea, shivering with the cold, but getting brighter and clearer in the head, which I now found was badly cut—but it soon stopped bleeding; and you may well suppose that mine were not pleasant thoughts as I hung there right under the ship's stern, cold, sick at heart, waiting for the morning, and, as it seemed to me, to be put out of my misery.

If any poor wretch ever longed for the coming of

daylight, I was that poor fellow as I clung there, feeling so weak and bad at times that I could have cried like a child, and wondered why I did not slip off and go down into the long sleep in a sailor's bed. But after a bit I remembered my 'bacca, and felt for



it; and there it was, sure enough, in a steel box in one pocket, while my knife, made fast round my waist by a lanyard, was slipped in the other. So I soon got a little bit in my mouth, and if ever a bit of 'bacca was a comfort, that was then. Being quite clear in my head now, and only in pain—pretty sharp pain, too, from the cut—I could think over the goings on of the past night, without feeling muddled and confused, as I did at first when I tried to; and now it all seemed plain enough, and just as poor Tom thought, for it was a deep-laid plot to get hold of the treasure, and one which had succeeded only too well. And then, in a half dreamy way, I began to try and count up how many had been killed, for I was turning queer and faint again; but I counted them up once—two men in the watch, one



being the second mate; the skipper, the old Major, old Watts, Tom Everard, and Jack Law—seven.

"That's wrong," I says, the next moment; "he ain't gone, you know, mate."

So I counted again; but Jack Law—which was me, you know—got in the number again. And do

what I would, I couldn't count up without putting myself among the killed, till I scooped up some water, and bathed my face and head, when it got clearer again, and the cut tingled and smarted. Then I counted them up all right—six; and I sat there, thinking, and wondered whether they had killed the poor girls. But, at the same moment, I remembered Hicks and Phillips, when a regular shudder ran through me, which was followed by a sense of going half mad, and I stooped down, and set my teeth fast on the chain that I was clinging to, to keep from shouting out. Then I sat up again, nearly blind, with the blood seeming to rush into my eyes—and that's how I felt every time I thought about those two scoundrels.

Once or twice I got pinching myself, to see if I was awake, and whether it was all true; for the more I thought of the bloody work of that night the more unlikely it seemed. For though we used to hear tell of such things in old times, and the old salts could tell many a long thunder-and-murder



pirate-yarn, yet such a set-out as this did not seem to belong to these days, and over and over again I fancied that I was lying up for a fever, and a bit touched in the head.

But, worse luck, there was no deceit about it; and soon after getting the dead counted all right, I began to count up how many of our chaps there'd be left, and I reckoned as there would be eight, "and not one of 'em as would turn pirate, I'd swear," I says to myself. And then I wondered what they'd do to 'em, for I knew they were all caged up safe in the fore-castle. "Why, they'll shove 'em in one of the quarter-boats with the ladies," I says, "and cast 'em adrift."

Morning at last: first a faint light, than a red glow far up in the sky, where it was dappled with clouds; and then up came the sun, seeming to make every wave a mass of jewels dancing in a flood of ruddy gold; while the sky looked so cheery and bright, that it seemed more than ever impossible that such a bloody deed could have been done

since he set in peace the night before. Every warm ray seemed to cheer me up and give hope of life, till once more I began to wonder what was to become of me: was I to be shot, or fall off for the sharks, or be drowned, or what? But a look at the warm



sun and the bright sky cheered me on again, and I took a bit more 'bacca, thinking that I'd wait where I was till they sent the rest of the crew off in the boat, when I'd risk there being sharks about, and swim off to it, for I felt more disposed to trust to the sharks than to the devils who had possession of the ship.

After a bit there seemed to be some one moving about; for the rudder was shifted, and the ship made some way; but directly after it fell calm, and she swung round, so that I got the full glare of the sun, which began to dry me a bit, and warmed my chilled and stiffened limbs; and then again after a bit I could hear them dashing water about and swabbing the decks as busy as could be.

"That's to get rid of the blood," I says; for I seemed to picture in my mind that the deck would be marked and streaked all across where they dragged the bodies. . And then I could hear plenty of noise and talking and swearing; and all at once I started, for there was the sharp crack of a pistol-shot; then more noise and swearing; and I was in hopes that was the worst of it, for a horrid fear came upon me that they were going to shoot all left aboard who would not join them. But I told myself they could not go so far as that, more especially as they were now in cold blood, and



there would be no resistance; but I shuddered the next minute, for there came a heavy splash in the water—one that I knew too well now—and after a while there came a body floating slowly along, with the face uppermost, and the eyes staring as it were

straight up into heaven, as if asking punishment on the murderers.

It was a face I knew well as that of a mate who had often hung to the yard side by side with me—a good man and true; and as he came slowly nearer and nearer, I fancied I saw a movement of one hand, and leaned forward to get hold of him. And then, whilst leaning sorrowfully down towards him, there came a fierce rushing swirl in the water, and he was drawn along some distance out behind the rudder, and then went under, feet first, his head disappearing slowly, in a horrible way, while at the same moment I heard a faint scream, and the whispering of voices above me, followed by the closing of a window.

The sound of these voices revived me so that I roused up, or I believe I should have slipped into the water, and made another meal for the sharks. I felt sick and dizzy, and I suppose that I was weak from loss of blood: and, besides, I had never seen any horrors before, while there had been enough



during the last few hours to upset any poor fellow. I felt that faint that I must have gone, for I had unlashed myself and tied my handkerchief round my head, because the cut was painful.

By and by I heard the boat lowered and kiss the water, and then there was a little hurrying about and noise of putting in water and provisions, and then lowering down them as were to go in her. Then in silence I heard her push off and the oars dip, and I made ready for a swim, or else to shout to them; for I felt quite joyful to think as there would be no more butchery, and that I had reckoned rightly about what they would do. So with my feet on the lower chain, and holding on with both hands to the upper, I leaned out as far as I could, and watched till the boat came in sight, hoping she would pull my way, being the opposite direction to the one in which the ship was laid.

I might have dashed in at once; and my plan was to kick and splash about all I could, so as to keep the sharks at a distance, till I was hauled into the

boat; but I thought I'd wait, in case any of the devils on deck might have a fancy for sending a bullet through me while I was swimming. So I leaned out as far as I could, and watched till the boat came in sight; but when at last I did see her, my heart seemed to sink, for there were only six men in her, and neither the young ladies nor the girl were there, while after a bit of study of the faces, I made out as it was the cook that was left behind.

"Poor girls! poor girls!" I muttered to myself, as a sort of cloud came from before my mind, and I knew well enough that I had been only cheating myself with false hopes; for I might have known well enough that the villains would not send off the poor girls; and then, with a bitter smile on my face, I shrunk back into the chains, feeling as if it was not to be, and that I was not to go away in that boat; for I seemed to see the noble old face of that dead soldier rise up before me, and smile sadly, as if to remind me of what I ought to do; and then I recalled his words about protecting the women, and a great many more thoughts came into my mind. I can't tell you all of what I thought; but I gave up the hope of leaving the ship, for it seemed to me as my duty was to stay by the old Major's daughters, if only for the chance of doing them a service; and if I could not, why I must try whether I couldn't die like a man at my post. And so, without seeing me, the poor chaps rowed away right off from the ship, till at last the boat seemed only a speck; and then I lost it as I sat wondering what I could do, and how I could be of service to the young ladies, and whether, if I did die, we should meet again in a place where I might not be so far off in ways and looks and habits—so different, and feeling such a gap between myself and some one that I was ready to lay down my miserable, beggarly life for at any moment.

CHAPTER XI.—HOW JACK LAW SAW BLOOD.

WHAT a strange thing a man's heart is, and how it seems to change!—now all hope and trust—the next minute all despair and sorrow. I suppose other men's hearts are like mine, though more polished and thoughtful. Mine was all change that day, as I sat on the chains under the ship's stern. I was not sorry because the boat was gone, and I did not feel sorry for myself; while now my mate Tom was gone—the only friend I ever had—I knew there was no one to miss me, and able seamen are plentiful enough in every port as soon as they've spent all their pay. But I felt sorry for those three poor girls, and my heart seemed to bleed for them over and over again as I thought of their position. Then I tried to scheme how I could help them; and from feeling weak and helpless I turned strong, and could tell that there was plenty of fight in my body yet if I got a chance. And now I wondered what I could do: whether I could climb up to the stern lights and speak to them; whether I could get a boat lowered down by myself; and whether, if I could, even without water or biscuit, it would not be better to push off on to the broad ocean, and put ourselves into the hands of God, than stay where we were.

But then how to do it? Where I now was, of

course I could do nothing; for the stern projected over me, and even if I had been a cat I could not have crawled up; while, if I tried to signal the ladies, I should be sure to be heard, when the mutineers would lower a boat and shoot me like a dog. The only thing that seemed right for me to do now was to wait.

The heat of the day came, and still it was calm; then the evening; and I'd sat there hour after hour with nothing to keep me up but a bit of tobacco, while the thirst I suffered was frightful. And now I knew how that it would soon be sunset, for the sky was getting all glorious again. More than once that day I had looked down into the clear depths of the water, and seen a shark far below the keel; and, to my fancy, he seemed to be watching me, and keeping his eyes fixed upon me in a strange, staring way, that made me shudder, and unclasp my knife to feel its edge and point—which were not like that of my cutlass, for this was sharp, and it was one of those long Spanish knives with a spring catch at the back, which kept it from shutting on your hand, and turned it into a dagger. I looked fiercely enough at my enemy below, and then stuck the knife ready open in my waistband; while thinking of the cutlass made me wonder what hurts had been received on the side of the pirates, for I could call them nothing else; and then I recalled how I had been partly insensible for some time, and perhaps one or two might have been thrown over the while—for I did not like the idea of their having come off scot-free. But a few minutes' thought told me they had not, for I could recollect the strange, heavy, yielding sensation each time I made a thrust before I was cut down, and somehow it seemed to give me a sort of savage satisfaction: and when I was disposed to shudder and to think of the horror of having a fellow-creature's blood on my hands, I thought of the face of that old officer, and the way in which he had been butchered, and then of his daughters; when I saw blood again, and had to hold my head, and then wet the handkerchief.

I had not heard any more of the young ladies, though once I fancied their window opened; but, as I said before, from where I now was I couldn't climb up nor yet see. And so I sat and waited, meaning, in spite of all difficulties, to try and reach the deck, if I could not get to the cabin-windows; for I was famished, and I meant to swim along to the bows, and try to reach the bobstay under the bowsprit.

The weather was still calm, not a breath of air stirring, while the ship rolled slowly and gently, with the swell making the water just lap musically against the rudder; when, after hearing a bit of talking on deck, I started and shuddered, for there came another heavy splash. And though I saw and heard nothing more but a little lashing about in the water, I knew from whose side the dead man had come, and it gave me a sort of grim satisfaction; while, when I looked down on the water becoming still, my shark was gone from down under the keel, and no body came floating by to horrify them as might be at the cabin window.

The rudder had not been moved, the ship making no way at all, and I sat and tried to picture out the

scene on board, and wondered what they would do when the wind came: where they would sail the ship to; and how they would manage now that they had got possession of the treasure; for I could not see what port they would make for, or how they could avoid the inquiries. Once or twice I turned heavy and sleepy, but a little cold bathing soon roused me up again; and I sat listening, for every now and then I could hear shouting and singing, and it was plain that there was plenty of grog on the way.

"If I had only Tom Everard and another mate or two," I thought, "it might go queer with some of them to-night when the grog is well aboard."

Then I began thinking about Hicks and Phillips, and I could now feel that nothing was too bad for the villains; and getting half wild, I stood up to see once more whether I could not reach the cabin windows, though I knew all the while that I, single-handed, could do nothing. But I soon found that it was useless to try, and sat down to wait till the sun had gone down, when I meant to signal the ladies to lower something down, and then I hoped to be able to swarm up.

I was sitting waiting for the night, watching the bright red glow all over sea and sky, for the sun was setting on the other side of the ship; and all sorts of strange thoughts were in my head, so that I seemed to have quite a hard fight with myself to keep from giving up. For my brain seemed in a whirl, and I was feverish, as I suppose, from the cut, which burned and hurt me a good deal; and more than once I had to mutter and talk to myself so as to prove that I wasn't a bit out of my mind, and that roused me up; though a few minutes after I believe I was quite raving—and 'praps you'll say no wonder when I tell you the reason.

It was just beginning to turn dusk, when all of a sudden I heard the window glass above me dashed out, and the little pieces came spattering down into the dark water; and then it was that as I sat there I went raving mad, and frothed at the mouth; for in the stillness of that evening there came shriek after shriek—oh! so pitiful, so agonizing, that I couldn't bear them, and my only wonder now is that I didn't stop my ears, and plunge down into the sea to be out of hearing. I knew the voices well enough, as there came pealing out above me the most pitiful prayers for mercy, for help, for pity, in tones that even to me, a rough sailor, were heartrending. Then, as I clung there, choking and writhing about, my breath came thick, so that it was as if a hand held me tightly by the throat, as I heard the noise of struggling and the dashing together of the cabin furniture, and breaking of glass; and though apparently smothered for a moment or two, as if by a hand laid across a mouth, the shrieks and cries for help burst out again, and once I heard quite plain the words, "Oh! papa, papa! help!" and began striking myself, and hitting my head against the side of the ship, for I couldn't bear to hear it.

Then, mixed up with the cries, came the rough voices of men, and oaths and cursing, and once I felt sure, the sound of blows; but the cries still continued, and then all at once ceased. Then I heard the loud banging of the cabin door, and voices on

the deck; and Hicks and Phillips came and leaned over the stern above me, and I heard them talking together, and Phillips says—

"Curse him! What did he mean by interfering?"

And then Hicks says—

"Wait a bit; he'll be as drunk as the rest of 'em in two or three hours' time, and then we'll see."

"Did you lock the door?" says Phillips; and then I didn't hear any answer, but it sounded to me as if they walked away, while I was holding my head with both hands to keep it from splitting; for it seemed to me then that my brain beat so that it must burst my skull.

It was dark now, and I had roused up, meaning to try and do something, or else get put out of my misery; when all at once I heard from above such a loud wailing sob as thoroughly unmanned me, and then when there came a low, deep, moaning, bitter cry, the tears began running down my rough cheeks; and though even in the dark there I felt ashamed of them, they seemed to do me good, and ease my burning head.

After a few minutes' listening if all was still on deck, I whispered and called gently, to try and make the ladies hear me, but I could not; and then as I listened I heard a broken voice whispering out, as it were upon the darkness, words that it seems to me must have been heard elsewhere, and been answered, though in a strange indirect sort of way; for there in the deep stillness, only broken now and then by the voices in the fore part of the ship, where the men all seemed to be carousing, I heard these words spoken, so sweetly and calmly that they thrilled through me; and now as I tell it they seem, as it were, to be throbbing in my ears—

"Oh, God! Oh, Father, forgive us, for we cannot live. We have prayed to You to protect us and send us help, and it has not come—"

And then the words seemed choked, while I turned all of a tremble, and the sweat stood in great drops upon my face, as it gradually came upon me what they meant to do; for I heard them in the calm stillness of that night—out there in the great ocean—those two sisters bidding each other good-bye so sweetly and lovingly; and my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth as the horrid cold chill came through me, and I knew that they were going to jump in.

I tried to speak once, twice, and tore at my throat with one hand; and then a strange noise came, and then I tried to speak again, and I cried out "Stop! stop!" in a voice that I did not know for mine; and then there was silence. But directly after I heard a sound on the deck, and then low voices speaking, and some one shouted "Hullo!" and I think it was Phillips. But all was silent again, and it seemed to me that whoever shouted took a turn up and down, spoke once or twice to some one else, and then went down below; when all was still silence again, and the night had come down black without a star to be seen.

All at once, just as I was going to speak again, I heard a voice I knew whisper hoarsely from above where I was—

"Who's there?"

"Hush!" I whispered, leaning out as far as I

could, while the chains swung about and drew the rudder towards me; "hush! it's me, Jack Law;" when I heard some one say—

"Oh, Mary! then God has heard us."

And there was a noise that made my heart beat, for it was as if some one had fallen on the cabin floor.

In a few minutes' time I heard the first voice again whispering—

"Oh, if you are a man, do not deceive us; pray, save us! For heaven's sake help; I do not know your voice."

"It is me—Law, miss," I whispered; "it is indeed."

"But Law was killed," she sobbed.

And I could feel that she was afraid some trap was being laid for them.

"Only hurt, miss," I whispered. "It's me, indeed, miss. You can't see me, for I'm on the rudder chains. It's me as showed you over the ship in Sydney harbour—who you gave the shilling to, and whose dirty hand left its mark on your glove, and—"

I didn't say any more, for she gave a joyful sort of cry then; but I whispered again—

"Hush! hush! speak low, or we shall be heard. Miss Mary—"

"Yes," she cried eagerly.

"Is there a rope of any kind there?"

There was silence for a minute, and then she said,

"No."

"Are you listening?" I whispered.

"Yes," she said.

"Then take the sheets from the cots, and tie them tightly together, and then fasten one end round the table—tightly, mind."

I waited a bit; and I could just make out that she was busily toiling, and I was all anxiety, for I recollected the words of those two villains as they leaned over the side. In a few minutes, though, I heard her whisper, in a despairing voice,

"I can never tie them tightly enough with my weak hands."

"Never mind," I whispered, "only tie them together, all you can find, and lower them down."

And then there was another pause; while I could hear some one roaring out an old sea song in the fore-castle—a song that ought only to have been sung by honest sailors.

It was very dreadful now waiting, all anxiety and fear lest those fellows might come; but soon there came down something that I could see shining white with the light from the cabin-window, and then it was swayed backwards and forwards, and after many tries I managed to reach it. Then more and more was lowered down, till there was three times as much as was wanted; and I made the knots tight, and whispered to her to haul up and make it fast to the table-leg.

"Now," I whispered, "pull up till you feel my knots, and then twist it round and round the leg, and hold on;" for I knew that I should now only be depending on my own knots.

In a few moments I tried and found that the sheet-rope would bear my weight; and reaching up as far as I could I grappled it, swung off, and getting

my toes against the stern carving I swarmed up, and a minute after I was hanging on by the cabin-window, with Miss Mary clinging to me, her head for a moment on my shoulder, and crying and begging of me to save them, while down on the floor, in a faint, lay her poor sister.

My God, it was a sight! and I felt madder than ever as I looked at them both by the light of the cabin lantern. There was their beautiful hair torn down and hanging loose; dresses half-dragged from their shoulders; while right across the face of Miss Mary was the mark as of a blow, and her poor lip was puffed up and bleeding.

She was standing up again now, with her little white hands resting on mine, and looking in my face so pitifully; but when she saw my look, she shrunk back and tried to draw her torn dress over her shoulders, and covering her face with her hands, she sank down sobbing and shame-faced by the side of her sister, while her beautiful golden hair rippled all over her, and hid what she had tried to conceal.

"Miss Mary," I whispered; for I knew that the time was short.

She started up again and came to me, putting her hands in mine—a poor dove—as much as to say, "I'm so helpless;" and a sort of proud feeling came over me as I stooped my head and kissed them, as reverently as I would had they been those of angels.

"Pray save us, Law," she whispered.

"As I hope God may save me," I said, "or I'll die for you."

And then there was silence for a few moments, as I clung there, thinking whether it would be best to stay with them or go up on deck, which I could reach now from where I was by a little climbing, and see whether it was possible to get a boat. If I had dared, I should once again have kissed the little soft hands that nestled in mine so trustingly; but I felt that I should be a coward, and I did not.

Just then Miss Maude sighed, and then opened her eyes, and on seeing her sister shivered and began crying; but the next moment she caught sight of me, and she put up both hands to me in such a piteous way, just like a little child would that was going to say its prayers.

I can't tell you how I felt then; for there was no fear or pain, but a kind of proud happiness, to think of their putting such trust in and looking up so to me—me, you know, a rough sailor, as had been kicked about all his life, and no one had cared for.

That look did it, and I whispered—

"Now I'm going on deck."

"Oh, don't leave us!" sobbed Miss Maude.

While her sister was now down on her knees by her side.

"It is to try and get you away," I whispered.

And then, as I moved, Miss Mary whispered—

"We'll pray for you, John Law."

"Then I shall do it," I said to myself, as I quietly climbed from bit to bit; and feeling nerve enough for anything, stood at last on the poop.

I was soon close under the bulwarks, crawling along; and being an active fellow then, I made my way easy, having on a pair of canvas trousers and

a blue Jersey—shoes and stockings being things we sailors keep for high days and 'long-shore.

I found the binnacle-light burning, but the man at the wheel was coiled up drunk, asleep; and then I stopped, listening in the dark a bit, when I crept up softly and put out the light. Then I had another listen, and could tell that the men were most of them in the fore cabin, where there seemed to be plenty of drunkenness and carousing going forward; while as far as I could see, there was no watch on deck, though of course I did not expect there would be. Half a dozen staunch fellows could have secured the ship easily, and as I thought so I felt for my knife, and there it was open in my belt.

The next thing I did was to crawl to the skylight and peep down into the passengers' cabin, where I could see Hicks and Phillips playing cards, while another sat on the bulkhead drinking grog and nursing a tied-up arm; and as I looked down my hand trembled as I longed for a pistol. But it was a good job I had not got one, or I should only have spoiled what followed; while at the same time a thought came into my head that, if I could have seen the ladies safe off, I could have set fire to the poor old ship, and been burnt with the scoundrels with all the pleasure in life.

One moment I thought of trying to make fast the hatch upon them; but it seemed as if it would only have been making an alarm for nothing, for my plan was to try, if it was possible, to lower down a boat and work her round to the stern windows. So I crept away from the skylight and got under the bulwarks again, where it was all dark as pitch, and crept along towards where the other boat hung from the davits, when all at once some one had me by the throat, and tried to turn me on my back; but I was too quick for him, for I gave a twist, had my knife out in a moment, and against his ribs, while I hissed out—

"You're a dead man if you stir."

CHAPTER XII.—HOW JACK LAW USED HIS KNIFE.

I HEARD two hearts beating heavily that night, as I thought about how much depended on me, and how likely it was that at any minute these fellows might make their way to the cabin where the ladies were anxiously looking for my return. And then the big drops of despair stood on my forehead, as I felt how near my plan was to being upset and an alarm given. I did not want to kill this man; but it seemed to me that I must, for the sake of them poor girls; and thinking fast—all of this in a few moments—I wondered whether he would make much noise, and what state I should be in when I went back to the cabin—that is, if I got there.

For that was sharp practice there, both of us on our knees close under the bulwarks; and I could feel his hot breath on my face, while he must have felt mine. Just then he gave a bit of a twist, and my knife pricked him, for I was in deadly earnest; but the prick made him give such a start he got a bit the better of me, having tight hold of the hand which held the knife.

"Now, you murdering, piratical scoundrel," he hissed between his teeth; and I began to feel that if I didn't look sharp I should have the worst of it.

"Now, give up the knife, you dog, or I'll throttle you, if it's only for poor Jack's sake."

"Hullo!" I says in a whisper, slackening my hold.

"Hullo!" he says in a whisper, slackening his hold.

"What! Tom, matey!" I says.

"What! Jack, old lad!" he says.

And I'm blest if we didn't hug each other like two great girls.

"Why, I thought they'd knocked you on the head," I says in a whisper.

"Why, I see them pitch you overboard," he says, "when I dodged 'em and got up the shrouds, and I thought you were dead as a caulking hammer."

"Yes," I says, "but I got in the rudder-chains."

"Ah," he says, "and I was knocked down, but I managed to get away; and after that I made my way below, and hid under that empty water-cask we stowed in, you know. I aint been out half an hour."

"Who's on deck?" I says.

"Only that chap at the wheel," he says; "for I'd just been all round when I run against you." And then he says, quite chuff, "You needn't have been so 'nation free with that thundering knife o' yours, Jack Law, for my ribs is a-bleeding."

I couldn't wrangle then, I was too anxious; but we had five minutes' whispering, which ended in our creeping up to where the boat hung.

"There's a breaker of water in her," says Tom, after feeling about a bit.

"Perhaps there's some biscuit in the locker," I says.

"But," says Tom, "hadn't we better stay in hiding? We shall be starved."

"Tom, mate," I says—and then I tried to tell him of all that I had heard and seen; but before I had finished, he says to me,

"Did you see that other poor girl, Jack?" and he spoke quick and short.

"No," I says, starting, for till that moment I hadn't remembered about her at all. "No," I says, "I forgot all about her, poor lass."

"Just see if the hitcher, and oars, and sail are in all right," he says; "I'm with you, mate."

Everything happened to be in its place, for old Watts was a good officer, and wouldn't have the boats turned into store-places for all sorts of rubbish, but kept clear and ready for use: and we soon felt our way to the lines, undid them, and then began slowly to lower her down, meaning to hitch the ropes at last and slide down ourselves.

The blocks run easily enough; but on such a silent night, do what we would, there was some noise, and at last one of the runners in a block gave such a chirrup that the noise in the cabin stopped, and we stopped too, giving the ropes a hitch round our hands and crouching under the bulwarks, and directly after some one came up the cabin stairs and on deck; and as we stooped there in the black shade, holding on by the lines lest they should slip ever so little, Hicks—for I knew his step—walked close by us right forward, listened at the forecabin-hatch for a few moments, and then walked back on the other side, when he spoke to the man at

the wheel once or twice, but there was no answer. Then we heard him kick the fellow savagely; when, muttering to himself, he went below again.

"That was close," muttered Tom, in a low whisper, for Hicks had almost brushed against us.

And then we each took a good long breath, and amidst a good deal of noisy talking the boat kissed the water, and we lashed the lines fast.

"Now if we only had some more prog, mate," said Tom, "I wouldn't care."

"Don't stop," I says. "There's fishing lines in the locker, and most likely they've something in the cabin."

"All right," says Tom.

And he slid over the side, and was in the boat in a moment, but not without rattling one of the oars, and I trembled again for fear he should have been heard. But all was quiet, and the next moment I was beside him; and as we couldn't unhook, I cut the lines fore and aft. And then Tom softly worked her along under the windows where those devils were sitting, past the windows of the captain's cabin, round the rudder; and then there was a cry of joy, for I had fast hold of the sheets that hung down into the water.

"Make her fast with the painter, Tom," I said.

And then up I went, and the next moment I was standing between them two poor creatures, and both of 'em clinging to me in that sad way that it was pitiful.

"Hush!" I whispered. "Where's the poor girl?"

Miss Mary took my hand, and led me to the little side cabin and pointed, and I looked in, and thought she was lying there asleep in the cot; but Miss Mary went close up, and stooped down and kissed her softly, then showed me a red stain on the sheet, and afterwards drew it carefully over her face, and shut the door.

I knew what all that meant, and shivered again; but there was no time to spare, and I stepped to the door of the big cabin to make it fast, but I found that the bolts had been wrenched off and the lock was fast on the other side. So I stepped back, drew up the sheet, and had a look at the knots, and made it fast round Miss Maude, for her sister would not go first. Poor girl, she tried all she could to help me, and, creeping out herself, I lowered her down into the boat, and the shaken sheet told me all was right.

"God bless you for this!" whispered Miss Mary, crying all the time, as I drew up and fastened the sheet round her. "Be kind to us, for we are in your hands."

I didn't answer—I couldn't; but I knelt down and kissed her hand.

Miss Mary was a deal more active than her sister, and in another minute I had her lowered down into the boat, and Tom cast off the sheet.

"Shy down some blankets," he whispered.

And opening another little cabin-door, I dragged out those that were in the berths and threw them down, and the pillows too. There was plenty of provision on the table—meat, and biscuit, and cheese, and cake—and this I stuffed into a pillow-case and lowered down. Then I opened the lockers, in which were biscuit-tins and two wicker bottles,

and I lowered them down, for I felt safe now, for the ladies were in the boat; and if any one came, I could be down the sheet in an instant, when we could push off into the darkness, where pursuit must be almost hopeless.

So fast as I could I lowered down everything I could lay hands on—things which the Major must have prepared for the voyage: cases of preserved meat, and vegetables, and soup, and bottles of wine—till I had sent down a rare stock of provision; while more than once as I did so it seemed to me that I heard a groan come up to me out of the darkness.

Last of all I began to think it was time for me to go: when I gave a start, for Tom Everard's face appeared at the window, and the next moment he stood in the room.

"Where is she, Jack, mate?" he says; and I pointed to the little cabin door.

He went forward, stopped, groaned, and then opened the door; and I saw him pull down the sheet; and then he came out the next moment looking like a ghost, and he slipped out of the window and was gone.

I now gave one glance round, and not seeing anything else likely to be useful, I went to the window and whispered to Tom to cast loose, for I thought it was time I went. But all at once it struck me that I might as well have the sheets, for they would do for sail or awning if we wanted them; so I went down on my knees to untie the rope, meaning afterwards to slip it round the leg, slide down it double, so that I could cast one end off afterwards, and draw all after me.

But it was hard work, for the knot had got strained, and my fingers being no good, I tried my teeth; but they were no good; so pulling out my knife I cut the rope, drew up enough so that it should run double, and had passed it all right round the leg, when I seemed to see more light in the room, and I heard a noise, and leaping up, I started aside just as Hicks stood in the door and fired at me.

THE schoolboys are again studying hard. One out of ten of them knows what is the capital of Austria, and nine out of ten of them know which orchards within five miles of the school-house bear the best eating apples.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

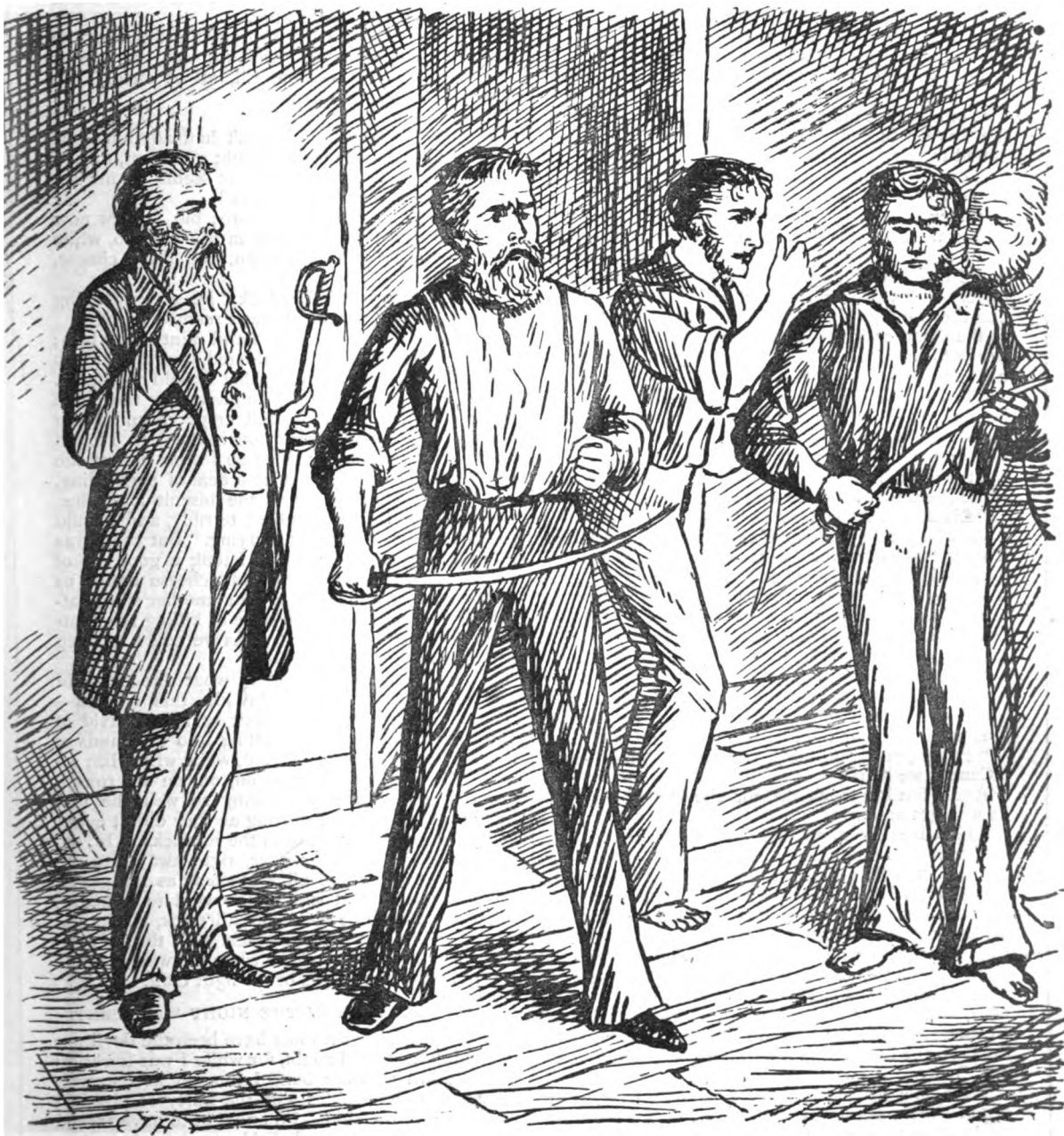
Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zyllo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

THE LOG OF JACK LAW.

A NEW YEARS YARN.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.



AWAITING THE ATTACK.

The Log of Jack Law.

A NEW YEAR'S YARN.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XIII.—HOW BLACK DARKNESS PROVED A FRIEND.

HICKS then stepped forward, cocking his revolver for another shot. But he had no time, for, mad with rage and passion, I gave him no chance, but, leaping at him, I was bearing him back in an instant, with my knife driven down deep into throat and chest.

It only took a moment, and then as I dragged out the knife, I turned sick; but I stepped over him, pulled to the door, and was out of the window just as Tom was coming up by help of the boat-hook, for he could not reach the sheets.

"Back," I whispered—"back quickly."

And while he was getting out of my way the cabin lamp shone strangely upon the face of Hicks, so that I could see his eyes turning up, and his hooked fingers make two or three clutches at the carpet, and then he lay still. The moment after I was down in the boat, and with one tremendous shove sent her yards away from the ship, right, as it were, into a thick bank of darkness.

Then I came all over in a tremble, and passed my hands over my wet face, for it seemed awful what I had done; and I tried to think whether the ladies knew it; but all was dark as could be, only we could see the lights in the stern windows a little way off, while there seemed to be quite a noise on board.

"Lie down all," whispered Tom.

And I heard a rustle as if the ladies obeyed, while Tom got one oar over the stern of the boat, and began paddling away very softly, not daring to make a sound, for just then three or four shots were fired at random from the open cabin window. Then we could see them on the deck, and some one fired a pistol again; but the bullet never came near us.

"They're going to try and launch a boat, I expect," said Tom, as he paddled away, "and there's the dingy, as will only hold two; and as for the longboat, they won't get her over the side to-night."

"Pray, pray row fast," whispered Miss Mary.

"Cannot we help?"

And I felt her touch me, for she leaned forward as if to get an oar.

"God bless you, no, miss," I said, in a whisper, as I tried to shake off the horrible feeling that was on me. "We'll bend to it directly."

And then I got one oar out, and Tom came behind me and sat down, and we paddled gently a bit farther, till we thought that they couldn't hear the sound of the oars in the rowlocks, when we bent to it, and made the water rattle under the bows of the boat as we rowed on, stroke after stroke, for a good hour, and all on right through the thickest darkness I ever saw, and long after we had lost sight of the lights in the cabin windows of the good ship *South-ern Cross*.

Once only we eased a bit, for we could hear, from out of the darkness just in front of us, a sweet low voice saying some words, and we stopped rowing till these words were ended, when, from behind me,

in a solemn voice, Tom Everard said "Amen." But I did not speak, for I gave a shudder, and seemed to feel as if I dared not say "Amen" to a prayer just then; for I knew that there was blood upon my conscience; and though it was in self-defence, and I had slain the man who had been at the head of all the misery, yet I couldn't feel happy over it, and sat there wishing that some other hand had cut short the villain's life.

Then on we rowed again—long, hard pulling, so that the light cutter went well through the water; and no word was spoken, till, all at once, Tom Everard threw in his oar.

"What is it?" I says.

"Matey," he says, "I haven't had anything but a bit of 'bacca since tea the night afore last, for it's past eight bells, I think; and it seems to me we should work better after rations."

I hadn't thought of it before; but I knew now how weak I was, so I pulled in my oar too, while Tom got hold of a biscuit-tin, and some cheese, and a bottle.

"Lend me your knife, Jack," he says, speaking all in a whisper, for the stillness seemed awful.

And naturally enough my hand went to my belt; but the next moment I shuddered, and told him to break the cheese, pretending that I could not find it.

Just as we pushed off I could see by the cabin lights that Miss Maude had crept down at her sister's feet; but on feeling now in the dark, I found that they were side by side; so I drew one of the blankets over them, and after a deal of persuading, got them to take some of the biscuit and wine. But the poor things trembled terribly, and I could tell that Miss Maude was crying. But there was no time to lose; so Tom and I took a good sip of wine each, put some biscuit and cheese beside us on the seat, and made ready for another start, eating as we went on for the sake of killing the faintness, and then rowing as true as we could to keep the boat's head the same way.

Where we were going, or in what direction, did not seem to matter; for it lay like this with us—that we were in the same strait as King David of old, we had the choice of falling into the hands of men, or into the hand of God, while with Him we knew there was mercy; so on, on, on we rowed, never seeming to tire, knowing so well the fear the poor girls were in, starting as they did at every splash of the oar or creak in the rowlocks. On, on, on we rowed, hour after hour, right away into the thick darkness, where all was silent as the grave, not even the faintest sigh of the wind to be heard, not a dim star to be seen—but all thick, black, and impenetrable, like a huge black wall, that always went back as we advanced; while the water lapped gently beneath the bows of the light craft.

CHAPTER XIV.—HOW THE NIGHT WAS SPENT.

I SUPPOSE that it must have been the devil put it into my head again, for while I was lowering things down into the boat, I thought how easy it would be to be upsides with the party of piratical murderers in the ship. I'd only got to have turned over the cabin lamp, and she'd soon have been in a blaze, when my gentlemen would have had enough

work to save themselves, and the treasure would have gone to the bottom. But I shouldn't have done such a thing, and in another minute I should have been quietly helping to shove off the boat if Hicks hadn't rushed on to his death.

It was a terrible thing to think on, though he deserved it so richly, and I only did it, as it were, in self-defence; but sometimes since, when I've thought of it all in the watches far out at sea, it has seemed to me that I did it more eagerly than I should have done in an ordinary case, for there was the thoughts of those two poor girls strong on me at the time, and it seemed a good deal like revenge for what I had heard them suffer as I sat on the rudder chains. And yet I almost think I can say that there was no thought of what I had suffered myself when I struck at him.

I should say it was getting on past the middle of the night when we laid to at it, and rowed straight off right away into the thick darkness, with not a sound to be heard but the "lap, lap, lapping" of the water against the boat's stem, and the splash and rattle of our oars. There wasn't a word spoken, for we wanted all our breath, for all depended upon our being well out of sight of the ship when day broke, and of course they would be sweeping the offing with a glass. The boat seemed to answer to our strokes like a live thing, bounding along through the smooth sea—up this long gentle roller, and then gliding down that one, till the motion seemed to grow monotonous in its regularity. What I was most afraid of was that we might get rowing in a circle, and so not be far enough off; for it was impossible to judge of our direction there in the dark without star or compass, and we knew well enough what must be the end of it if once they caught sight of us. The very thought of our being caught made me shiver again, and lay back at my oar, till Tom muttered "Steady," when steady it was; and we rowed on, feeling how much depended upon the muscles of those arms of ours.

There was something very awful and solemn about that black night; and one way and another I felt quite low-spirited, for the thick blackness we were driving through seemed so to put me in mind of funerals ashore, as it hung always before us out there in the great ocean, never any further away, but always hanging heavy like upon us, so that under any circumstances I believe a man would hardly have cared to speak.

A regular, long, steady pull, hour after hour, and all that while not a star to be seen, while I could hardly make out my mate Tom when I looked over my shoulder. Nobody but men rowing for life could have put the boat through the water as we did, specially after what we had gone through; but row on we did, hour after hour, to get further away from our poor old ship.

Once or twice I seemed to make out something indistinct in the stern, which was, of course, the ladies, and, as far as I could make out, they never stirred, but remained clasped in one another's arms all through the night. But it was hot, steaming hot, that night, with not a breath of wind stirring, and at last the pull began to tell upon us both, so that we were glad to have another sup a-piece of the

wine; but that did not take us long, and then we were off and away again faster than ever.

All at once I began to grow excited, for, as if with a sudden leap, the clouds began to tinge, and I saw morning would be upon us directly, while now was to be decided that important point, whether we were lost or saved. I could feel that it was useless if we were in sight, and our night's struggle had been vain. The darkness that had laid so thick upon us was becoming grey; while we now knew, what of course we were ignorant of before, namely, that we had been pulling due north.

All at once, up came the sun, and spread a golden path right up to our boat, ending there by shining right upon the faces of those two poor girls, as they half lay, half sat there in the bottom of the boat, fast asleep, with their arms tightly round one another, and Miss Mary, as it were, acting as protector to her dark-haired sister.

Pale and haggard, and in one case with a dark bruise across the face, there they were, seeming, in their utter helplessness and dependence, to ask for our protection; and, as if moved by the same thoughts, Tom Everard and I stopped rowing and looked at them. Then we each tucked the oar under our legs for a few moments, while I heard poor Tom give a sigh as if from the very bottom of his heart.

Up went the sun, higher and higher, and there was the still, calm sea gently heaving, and dyed all of the most beautiful colours. But we had no thought for the glowing morning, for something else took our attention—there was the ship not half the distance off that I had hoped, and so near that I knew if a breeze sprung up she must soon overhaul us. If the darkness would only have kept on, I should not have cared; but there it was a bright, glowing morning, with the clouds disappearing fast; and I knew that if those in the ship looked out they must soon see us, our only hope now being that, half drunk over night, they might be hours yet before they roused up, especially as Hicks, their leader, was gone.

For a moment the thought of him and his end seemed to beat me down; but there was a sort of satisfaction come again the next minute, for it seemed that his death might yet be the means of saving us. They might be dispirited with his loss, or not care enough for him to wish to follow us, the gold being their aim.

"A head wind might keep them off," said Tom, as if thinking the same as I did.

And then he looked at the ship as if he had a hankering after her, and wished to be back; and more than once he frightened me that way, seeming to like to try and save the ladies, but all the while being reluctant to put distance between him and the ship.

"Head wind aint no use," I said. "I never saw a full-rigged ship as could sail so close to the wind as the old *Cross*."

"I wonder whether they'll throw her overboard," Tom muttered to himself; and I did not speak, for I knew what he was thinking about.

And then came in my own mind the recollection of what I had seen of the sharks as I sat on the

rudder chains. The thoughts of it made me turn round to look at Tom, and wonder whether he knew of the sharks, and I was quite startled to see how the poor chap was altered—he looked years older, and drawn and strange, so that I hardly knew him;



while I could feel what bitter agony the poor fellow must have gone through.

"Wash your face, Jack," he says in a whisper, as he turned to look at me after we had been lying-to, watching the ship for a few minutes as she now stood out quite plain on the horizon; "wash your face and hands, mate."

I looked down at my hands, and shivered, for they were all over blood, while my face, I suppose, was in the same state, and it was not from the cut in my head. Then I thought about whose blood it was, and how once I had gone overboard and saved him. And then I leaned over the side, and had a good dip in the cold, pleasant water, which seemed so reviving and refreshing; and while I was drying myself upon my handkerchief, I heard a sigh, and directly after Miss Mary opened her eyes, and looked at me in a strange, lost way, as if she did not know where she was, nor what had happened, nor anything about it. But directly after her face began to light up, and, like a true soldier's daughter as she was, she seemed to know her duty, and that was to make the best of things. So she gently raised herself, and stretched out her hand to me, and I kissed it; then she reached it over to Tom, and he kissed it too, when Miss Mary whispered to me—

"I told him about it last night. Be gentle with him."

Thinking, you see, of him more than herself in such a time of woe; and I learned afterwards how Tom had asked after the poor girl we left in the ship, and burst out into a bitter groan when she had told him that a bullet struck her in the fight in the cabin when the Major fell.

Well, we both kissed her hand—roughly, you know, of course, but we meant well; and, bless her, she knew it. And then, giving us a sad, sweet smile, she leaned over her sister, and kissed her tenderly, so that she woke to her trouble.

CHAPTER XV.—HOW JACK LAW WAS IN DESPAIR.

WE were dead beat, both of us—Tom and I; but I gave one look at the poor old *Cross*, and so did Tom; and we both understood what we ought to do, and rowed on with a quiet, steady stroke, for we were too tired to make a spurt. I got the ladies to sit down in the bottom of the boat, so as to show as little as we could, and of course we were too busy to notice them, and pretended we couldn't see anything; while Miss Mary seemed, after one short, bitter cry, to choke down her grief, and do all she could for every one's comfort; and very soon she begged of us to stop and have some breakfast. And how busy she had been 'ranging the pillows and blankets, and making a place for her sister to lay down! for the poor girl was so ill she could hardly hold up her head. Then, too, Miss Mary had stowed the stores about a bit straight, and made things handy, in a way just as if she hadn't been a delicate lady as had never known trouble before. And now, as I said before, she and her sister begged of us to stop and have some breakfast.

But we daren't do it. I knew that every yard now was as good as a mile by and by; and though I felt ready to drop, it was pull on, pull steady, though we had one or two fresheners as we went on.

I didn't think that they knew of the old *Cross* being in sight, for nothing was said about it; but as she was passing a cup of wine over to Tom, Miss Mary leant her hand on my shoulder, and whispered—

"Don't let my poor sister know that the ship is in sight."

How that poor girl did work to cheer up her sister as she lay there! And to have looked at her you would not have thought she had a trouble in the world; for she had a cheerful word for all of us, and as I dragged away at my oar it seemed to me that we must have got an angel in the boat.

I did not want to make any more show than I could help, or I should have tried to contrive an awning over where the ladies were; but we laid a blanket across an oar, so as to shelter Miss Maude, for the sun came down fiercely. There was a little mast ready for stepping, and a lug-sail that I could have hoisted for the light breeze that just touched us to have given us a help along. But I daren't, on account of its showing so plainly; and I had just taken hold of my oar again when I saw that the old ship's sails were filling, and that she was moving fast through the water that now began to ripple and look dark where before it had been smooth as oil.

I couldn't help it—if my life had been at stake that groan must have come; for I felt so disheartened and worn out to think that after all we had gone through, after our desperate struggle and toil through the night, we were to be overtaken easily and captured in spite of all we could do; and I can say that then I had not a single thought for myself, but it was all for the poor girls there before me.

You see it was like this, that, instead of rowing straight off, one of us had been stronger at the oar than the other, and we had gone in a curve; not as any one need wonder, for even in broad daylight it

is impossible to keep a boat's head right and to row off in a straight line, without you have something to steer by; so what could be expected from two, pulling as we were in the dark—Tom bow oar, me stroke? And so it was then, that we were nothing like so far off as we might have been, and now after all it seemed that we were to be overhauled; and the sense of it was so bitter and cutting to me, that, as I said before, if my life had been at stake, that groan must have come tearing out of my breast as it did that time; when I started, for like an echo came another groan from behind me, and I turned sharp round just as Tom Everard's oar hit me in the back, and there was the poor fellow swooned right away and lying across the thwarts.

"All up," I muttered to myself, a quiet, resigned sort of feeling coming over me as I laid the oars in neatly; when Miss Mary came and helped me, and between us we got Tom laid comfortable in the bows of the boat, with pillows under his head. And then, while we were doing what we could for the poor fellow, we found what we did not know before—that his head was slashed right open, and he had covered it with his cap; and thus had he been working to the very last, sticking to his oar until he had dropped, without saying a single word, without giving a groan, till nature would stand no more, and he gave up.

We bathed his head, and tore up one of the sheets, and bound the wound as well as we could; and Miss Mary, with a neat little pair of scissors, had cut away the hair from about the place; so that I felt hopeful about him when we had laid him easy and shaded him from the sun. But as soon as we had done there came the dead weight of misery and sorrow again; for I could see that the ship was coming on fast, and I was, as it were, without a mate to help me and give me his advice, for I dared not point out the danger to Miss Mary.

After a bit, as I kept stealing a look at her, I fancied she was watching the ship, and seeing how we were fixed; but her face seemed so calm and peaceful, and she talked so sweetly to her sister, that I felt as she could not know it, but was in hopes we should yet escape.

They had, as I said before, been busy, one helping the other, and removed all the traces they could of the past ill-usage; but Miss Mary could not wash away that dark mark across her face, nor the cut upon her lip, and every time I saw it I seemed to feel something gripping, as it were, at my heart, almost like pain.

A groan from poor Tom roused me, and then the brave chap seemed to get a bit better and came to. And then I saw that his shirt was sticking to his side, where there was a little wound from my knife; but it was only a scratch, and did him no harm. Then he began to talk, but it was only strange wild stuff, and he threw his arms about and stared; while the only thing I could make out was the name of that poor girl as was shot, and he kept saying it in a whisper to himself.

We did all we could for him, and as fast as he threw it back I made up a shelter for him again, contriving so that the air should pass through; and then, feeling sure that they must have made us out

in the ship, and be coming after us, I thought I'd run for it all I could, and would step the mast and set the sail, even if it was only to be free another hour. So I was shading my eyes and looking towards the old *Cross*, to see what way she was making, for the sun shone full upon her, when all at once I found that I couldn't see her, for things looked misty and swimming-like, while the boat seemed dancing up and down; when I stood up hastily and tried to catch at something to save myself, but down I went backwards across the thwarts as if struck some heavy blow.

I suppose that did not last long, and that I soon came to, with a singing in my ears, and a horrible, sickly, deathly feeling; and then, as it slowly went off and a film seemed to clear before my eyes, I felt the blood rush to my face, and a wild thrill run through me, and I closed my eyes and lay as if I dared not move; for there was that sweet, gentle face bending over me, and those soft white hands were bathing my face, while twice over I heard a sob, and a warm pitying tear or two fell upon my face.

"Poor fellows! what you must have suffered for us!" she said.

And then, though I could have lain there for ever, I bit my lips and set my teeth, and thought of the old Major and duty, and I got up and said I was better now.

"It was that cut on the head, you see, miss, and the sun, and being tired and faint."

"What! were you wounded, too?" she exclaimed.

"Not much, not much, miss," I said; "one of those fellows cut me down in the scuffle that night when poor Tom got his wound. But," I said, with a half smile, as I tried to put a good face upon the matter, though I could not help feeling bitter as I said it,—“but I'm only a common, thick-headed sailor, and it takes a deal—”



"Hush, Law!" she said, in the quiet, dignified way as she could put on when she liked—that way of a lady that makes an ignorant man like me feel a strange kind of respect and awe, and think of being in company with something so far removed

above one. "Hush, Law!" she said. "Don't speak like that when you have acted so nobly, so heroically—and—and—may God bless you for it!"

Her voice seemed to break here, and she turned her face away for a minute, while I felt ready to gnaw my heart for having hurt her feelings; but the next minute she was quiet, and resigned, and still again, and tearing up some more of the sheet to make bandages.

"Let me look at your head, Law," she said, all at once; and I wanted to back out of it, telling her that it was nothing, would soon be better, and all that sort of thing. "Don't you know that I'm a soldier's daughter?" she said, with a smile.

But the next moment her poor face was working, and her lips quivering, and I could see what a pang had shot through her heart; while even at her words with rough me there came the recollection of the fine, fierce-looking old gentleman; and I couldn't help it, something seemed to make me speak, and I whispered—

"Died like a brave man and a honourable gentleman!"

"Thank you for that, Law," she said, sweetly.

And the face became quiet and still, though there were tears hanging to her eyelashes. And then, spite of all I said to the contrary, she put back my hands, and examined the place, and cut away the hair, and then bathed my head and bound it up; and I suppose it must have been a bad cut, for if I didn't go right off in a faint again just as she'd done binding it, and only came to feeling sick and done up, and without hardly a bit of life left in me.

The sun came down fiercer and fiercer, so that we were all soon parched with thirst, and glad of the water, of which fortunately there was a good drop; and there was Miss Mary going from one to the other of us and wetting our lips, for after two or three tries to get up and step the mast and set the sail, I found that it was of no use, and I had to lie still in the bottom of the boat in a dreamy, helpless sort of way.

And all this time the ship came nearer and nearer, slowly borne along by the soft breeze that made our boat gently rise and fall. Miss Mary told me from time to time, as I asked her; and she did it, too, without moving a muscle. And so the day wore on, poor Tom only muttering a bit now and then, and Miss Maude lying quite still and listless in the stern sheets.

At last, towards evening, when the coolness seemed to revive me, and I began to think of trying to get up, feeling shamefaced like to lie there and let Miss Mary wait on me, she came and kneeled down beside me, and put the bandage more comfortable, and told me how near the ship now seemed; and then, as I looked in her face, I saw that it was deathly white, while the mark stood quite out and plain, and her lips, too, they were white and parched, and there was a strange look in her eyes as she seemed to fix them on mine, and yet seemed not to be looking at me.

"Was any one killed last night when we escaped?" she whispered.

I could do nothing else, and I answered—

"Yes."

"Who was it?" she asked, in a voice that did not seem to belong to her.

"It was his own fault," I said; "it was to save my own life."

"Was it that fiend who shot poor papa?" she whispered.

"Did you see?" I said, starting.

"O yes!" she said, shuddering, and pressing her hands to her forehead; "I was standing with the inner cabin-door half open, and I saw him—"

She could say no more; but I could see her bosom heave and her whole form tremble with the sobs that came hurrying forth.

"Was it that fiend who shot poor papa?" she whispered again, with her face close to mine—"the man who insulted me on the deck?"

"Yes," I said.

And then she closed her eyes for a bit, and did not speak; but after a time she leaned closer to me, so that I could feel her breath upon my cheek, and then she whispered again—

"We shall be taken, shall we not?"

I could not answer, but raising my head a little I looked over the boat's side, and I could see that if this little breeze held steady, or freshened ever so little, the ship must be alongside us before dark, though now it kept dropping and being calm for half an hour together, when we could see the sails flapping from the yards, and the ship lie motionless, almost.

But she wanted no answer, for she read it all in my face.

"God bless you, Law, for your kindness to us," she said, softly; "then we must go to join poor papa."

And then she seemed as if she would say something more; but she did not speak for, perhaps, half an hour, but went and sat by her sister, who seemed to be asleep.

As the evening came on, the wind freshened, and the ship's sails bellied out, while she came bowling along towards us; when Miss Mary kneeled by me again, and spoke in a whisper—

"Law, would it not be better to die, and put ourselves in the hands of God? You know what is in store for poor us if we are taken; and I suppose," she said, mournfully, "they will not be merciful to you."

I shook my head, and lay looking at her as she knelt by me; for I was lost, and my head was in a whirl. Lost to think it should have come to this—that the young, beautiful, pure creature at my side should be driven to speak in this calm, resigned way of dying—of leaving the world—sooner than encounter the trouble that she felt to be in store. I do not know how I looked, or what she thought I felt; but she laid her little hand in mine, as a child would have done in her father's.

"Don't grieve," she said—"don't be troubled. It will be better so. A few moments' pain, perhaps—I don't know, for poor papa smiled, and the fierce look went off his face. Better so, and then there will be rest and mercy, and we shall all be joined again where there is no more sin."

She spoke with a beautiful smile upon her face, as if it was no trouble, and her eyes seemed to be look-

ing into the future. It seemed to me like it did once with the passengers on board a ship I sailed in, when, after days of tossing about in a storm, the captain told them that there was no hope, for the water was gaining on us, and he thought we must sink. And then, after the first pang was worn off, people seemed calm and resigned, and to look on the coming end as if it was only a rest from the horrors and pains they had gone through, and it did not trouble them. Some walked about, some prayed, and some sat and talked. But it was all done quietly; and it seemed to me then that the great God softened the terrors of those who were so soon to be face to face with death. But the boats saved many of those passengers when all hope was gone; and now I seemed to see the same look in Miss Mary's face as she knelt there gazing right away, so that I felt startled.

All at once her eyes seemed to come back to the present, and she went to poor Tom and altered his head a little, and moved the blanket so that the air should fan his cheek, and then knelt down again by me with the same sweet smile on her face.

"I want you to promise," she said—"to promise on your word as a man—a brave man who can feel for our sorrows, and who would be acting as I'm sure poor papa would wish were he here—I want you to promise that we shall not—poor sister and I—fall alive into the hands of those monsters."

"What do you mean?" I said, starting up, and falling all of a tremble; for it seemed so horrible to hear that young creature talk in that way. "What do you mean?" I said.

And I could feel the cold sweat standing all over my forehead.

"For God's sake—for the sake of your own mother—for our sakes—for the sake of all you hold dear and holy—and as you hope that He will be merciful to you," she whispered, "kill us both."

I trembled as I never trembled before, and everything seemed to swim round me; so that I gasped, and clutched about me for a few moments, for the idea seemed so frightful, so unbearable, that I was half mad.

"I couldn't—I couldn't!" I groaned at last; for the sight of the fast-nearing ship seemed to tell me of the dreadful despair that had made the poor girl whisper such horrors in my ear. "I couldn't—I couldn't!" I groaned. "I'll die for you, if you will."

"I know that, dear friend," she said, calmly. "You have proved that; but that is useless—you must do more. You will die with us, will you not? and there seems nothing to leave, now. Don't blame me," she said, with her lip quivering. "Don't think me cruel to ask so much, for I am a soldier's daughter, and, from a child, have often heard tell of death, and more than once been near it in India. But you have been our friend, and you will be one to us till the last?"

I groaned again, with my face in my hands, for I could not speak.

"Let us die calmly and quietly here," she whispered, with the same dreamy look upon her face again. "Not there, not in that dreadful ship."

And she shuddered again, and looked wild.

"I can't—I can't," I groaned.

"Would you sooner see me do it?" she said in a strange way, and taking my hands from before my face.

I could not speak—I was choking. I could do nothing but gaze wildly at the beautiful creature talking so calmly and patiently of death: while a glance at the ship again brought before me their fate, and something seemed to echo in my heart the words she had before said, "Better so."

"There is no mercy from those monsters," she said, following the glance of my eye. "We would not be again in their hands, and it will be rest. Promise!" she said.

"Promise!" she said again, and she clasped both my hands tightly.

And then our eyes met, and I did not speak, but just bowed my head, for the blood seemed to rush through my veins again as she held my hands, and I thought of the cries and prayers I heard as I held on by the rudder; and then I felt that, sooner than a hand should again be laid upon her, I would take her in my arms and plunge overboard.

"I promise," I said, at last; and then, in a husky voice, "And you'll forgive me?"

"Forgive you?" she said, with a smile, so sad, so sweet, and touching that I groaned again—"forgive you, dear friend? I'll thank you and bless you with my last breath."

On came the ship, with the wind freshening every minute, so that our boat seemed to dance upon the waves. The sun sank lower and lower, and the cool breeze seemed quite to revive me as I looked round, as if seeking some way out of the terrible end that awaited us. Miss Mary was kneeling beside her sister, and after a time she beckoned me, and I helped her to prop up Miss Maude. Then I went to poor Tom, who was fast asleep, and I stooped down and gave his old hand a grip. And then I noticed how lovely the sky was, and how the sea was all one wondrous glow of colours—brighter than I ever seemed to have seen it before; and I smiled sadly as I turned round and stepped over the thwarts of the boat, glancing at the ship, and seeing the figures on board, and even seeming to make out the black.

Then I went and sat down in the stern sheets between those two well-born ladies; and it seemed to me that, now we were so near the end, the distance between us grew smaller and smaller, and that birth and position would soon count as nothing at all. And the thought must have been the same with them, as, after going, both of them, and kissing poor Tom's hand, Miss Maude being helped by her sister, they came back to me, and sat again one on each side, clinging to me, clasping my rough hands, and trusting to me to save them, but not from death.

In the calm of that glorious evening, when we seemed floating on a sea of gold, whose bright waves lapped against the boat-side, more than one prayer was said aloud by a sweet voice, and, a poor, ignorant sailor, I never knew how much there was in those simple words we were all of us taught, till I heard them there uttered in such a quiet, resigned, trusting way, as I sat thinking of my dread-

ful promise, and how hard it was for them to die so young. And yet they both seemed resigned, though there was a strained, horror-stricken look in the eyes of Miss Maude that I did not see in her sister's.

And there we sat, with the vessel coming nearer



and nearer, but not to touch our boat; for now, stirred to the deepest depths of my nature as a man, I was sitting there with a boat-hook near at hand, waiting till the last spark of hope should be quenched, when, with a prayer that I might be forgiven, I was ready to drive out a plank or two from the bottom, and seek elsewhere for the mercy we could not get here from men.

Waiting, with the breeze freshening, the ship coming nearer, and looking golden in the sunset, while the waves whispered and lapped round our boat as we sat in silence waiting for the end.

CHAPTER XVI.—HOW REACTION CAME.

"ANOTHER quarter of an hour, and then death," I muttered, as I thought, to myself; but they both heard it, and Miss Mary looked up in my face with so sweet and heavenly a smile, as she said—

"Yes, dear friend; death and rest. But a little while and we shall be at peace."

It was not for such a one as me to answer her; but her sweet calmness seemed to nerve my arm, and as the ship came nearer and nearer, I drew the boat-hook closer to my hand, and laid it across, ready when the last hope was gone.

The sun was dipping below the waves, and, roused and excited as I felt then, it seemed to me that the broad, red path which stretched along the sea was the one that we should take; and again, then, as certain as death seemed, I don't know that I felt to dread it so very much, from the sense of sorrow and pity for the young and beautiful girls at my side.

"Soon, now?" said Miss Mary, as if questioning me.

And then, with a wild, strange look, she laid her little hand on the knife which stuck in my belt,

and, smiling in a curious way, she tried to open the great blade with her little fingers, while her sister, seeing the movement, covered her face with her hands, and glided fainting off the seat.

"Poor sissy! good-bye for a little while, good-bye!" cried Miss Mary, kneeling by her, and kissing her pale face; after which she glanced at the ship, now so near, and then fixed her eyes on mine. "I will not shrink," she whispered, and laid her white hand on the sharp knife I had now in my hand.

"No—no!" I whispered, hoarsely; "it's stained with *his* blood;" and, cutting the lanyard, I threw the knife from me, so that it fell with a splash in the sea. "No, no!" I whispered; "we'll all go down together."

As I looked at her, I remembered some words that I had once heard read from the Testament, about seeing Stephen's face shine like the face of an angel. I have said that hers was like an angel's face; but if I had thought so before, how much more did it seem so now, in its sad beauty—the bright, golden hair hanging down all loose, like a veil over her shoulders, and the glow from the setting sun, now half beneath the water, shining full upon her! The sight of all this made me hesitate, for it seemed impossible that any one could do harm to one so beautiful; and, though my hand was stretched out to take the boat-hook, I drew it back trembling.

But Miss Mary saw what was passing in my mind, and, leaning forward, she whispered, "Your promise!" when I called up those dreadful cries again, and seemed to see blood in my eyes once more as I seized the boat-hook, and stood up, and watched the ship bearing down upon us fast, with the breeze fresh and the water foaming under her bows, while the golden sunlight was gradually creeping up her masts, leaving the hull in shadow, as nearer and nearer she came, as if to run us down.

I gave one look at Miss Mary, and she held out her hands to me, and said, "Good-bye!" as calmly



as if we were parting for the night; and, laying down the hook, I took those little hands in mine, and was going to kiss them, the great sobs tearing out of my breast the while; but she put up her face towards mine and kissed me, her little lips resting

on mine an instant, and then, still calmly, she drew me towards her sister, lying insensible, and I stooped and kissed her—kisses given and taken, as we felt, on the brink of eternity, by way of farewell; and then once more I stood up in the boat, holding



the pole in my hand; but I turned once to gaze upon Miss Mary, whose eyes were now closed, as she knelt by her sister, her hands clasped, and her face turned up towards the sky, yet flaming with a few bright colours, though all below was shadow; and feeling, as I did, that it must be as she wished, I was ready—only, as I before said, waiting till the last spark of hope was crushed out.

And nearer and nearer came the ship, but with the shadow deepening; for we were where the twilight is short, and the change rapid from day to night. I could tell every face, though, on board, and see that preparations were being made for shortening sail; when even then I could not help a smile coming across my face, to see how little they knew our old ship, for I knew that they would shoot by us far, far enough before they could lie-to.

They saw me, I suppose, standing up with the boat-hook, and must have thought that I meant to hook on when they brought up; they could not tell that in another minute it would have gone crash twice through the bottom of the boat. I looked towards my poor old mate, who was fast asleep. Miss Mary knelt with her face still turned up and her lips moving, and her sister still insensible by her side.

"Better for those two," I muttered; "they will never feel the change."

And then I measured the distance with my eye between Miss Mary and where I stood; for I thought we would die together, and I felt that the moment had almost come.

Another glance at Miss Mary, who seemed half wrapped in shadow, while I could not tell now that her lips moved. A strange feeling of dread came upon me, and a desire to risk all and live; but the next instant I saw blood again, and turned my back to the ship, gave one yearning look towards those in the boat with me, for I felt that the moment had come, when a sob burst from my heart, as with a prayer for mercy—one learned years before, and which now came rushing to my lips—I raised the pole.

One blow, two blows would do it; for the planking of the light cutter was thin to a degree. I turned one glance over my shoulder at the ship, as some one shouted to me, and she dashed by us about twenty yards astern. Then, as if by a miracle, the wind freshened, and as the old *Cross* swept by, a bright light seemed to flash into my mind, and I let fall the boat-hook, my arms sank to my side, and I fell on my knees in the boat, muttering the words—

"*Saved! saved!*"

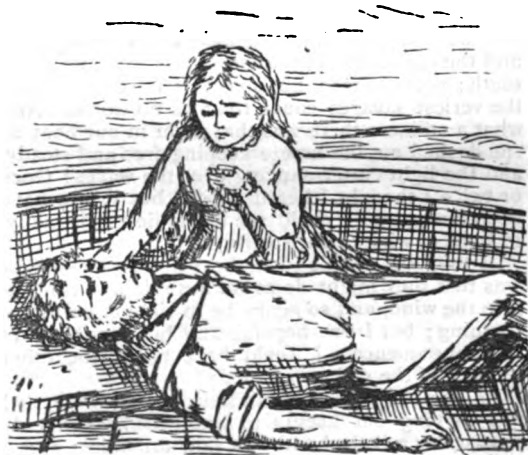
For the ship was dashing on far astern of us, and I knew that before they could round-to it would be night, for it was so dark already that I could hardly make her out.

"What is it?" whispered a voice in my ear.

And I started; for leaning over me, looking wild-like, with her hair blown out by the increasing wild-breeze, was Miss Mary. But I could not answer, only point towards the ship; for the change, as it were, from despair to hope, from death to life, was so sudden that I could hardly realize our position. But after a bit I whispered that there was yet a chance of their losing us in the dark; and then I tried to think of what was best to do, but for a bit my head was all in a whirl, and I could do nothing.

It was dark now, so that I could not have seen the ship but for the light they showed in her stern; but it was not like the night before, for the stars shone out brightly overhead, and there was a brisk breeze blowing. I could see by the way the stern-light lay that they had brought the ship up, but I knew that they could not see us. Once I thought I heard a shout; then there was the flash of a gun; and then the fools began to burn blue lights, thinking, I suppose, that we were flies ready to go and singe our wings.

But I could see my way clearly now, and set to



work and shipped the rudder as well as I could in the dark, going softly by Miss Mary and her sister, for they were praying. I knelt by them for an instant or two, and I kept on saying some words as I went on with my work. In a little time I had stepped

the mast, and cleared and hoisted the lug-sail, trembling all the while with anxiety. But before long I had it set with a reef in it, for the breeze freshened; and then, knowing pretty well where the ship lay, shaped my course so as to give her the go-by in the dark; for I felt sure that they would lie-to all night in hopes of picking us up; while, with the breeze then on, and the long dark hours before us, I hoped to look round the next morning with the offing clear.

So I took my place at the rudder, and, running almost before the wind, the light boat seemed to leap over the waves, careening over almost too much; but I trimmed her as well as I could, and at a whisper the ladies changed their places more to windward; when she tore on, sending the spray hissing by on both sides, and seeming half mad with joy.

Just then they burned a blue light again, and it showed me how closely I was running down on the ship; so I threw her up a few points, and kept on till I felt that we must be clear, when I put her right before the wind, and she rushed on like a wild thing leaping through the water; and I would not have carried so much sail but for the deadly peril we were in.

Another blue light, and this time far astern; and then another, when we must have been a mile off; and again a faint glow far astern; and then I fancied I saw another; but it could only have been fancy, for the bright stars overhead, seeming to quiver with the sharp breeze blowing beneath them, were the only lights I could see.

CHAPTER XVII.—HOW THEY STILL FLED FOR LIFE.

DARTING on before the wind, with the tiller in my hand, and the boat bounding along as if just set free, I felt wild, foolish: one minute I could have cried, the next minute I could have laughed, and danced, and sung. It was the reaction, I suppose, and I had hardly any control of myself. Sailing on, and on, and on—what mattered where, so that we could put miles of blue water between us and the old ship? Anywhere—east, west, north, or south; port seemed no object; for we knew that the veriest savages could treat us no worse. And what a stillness there was that night in our boat as she dashed on, the breeze keeping free and steady, and the light cutter dancing over the waves! Once or twice I thought I heard a sob; but it may have been fancy, and I could see the ladies indistinctly, in front of where I sat steering.

If they did not lie-to in the ship, the possibility was that they might do as we were doing—run before the wind, and so again be in sight of us in the morning; but I was hopeful, and but for dread of the consequences, I would have taken the other reef out of the sail.

And so I should think an hour passed when, as I was looking out keenly to windward, I suddenly started, for a little hand was laid on mine; and I spoke, for I had been silent before, not liking to interrupt what I once saw was going on.

"Only pray for this wind to keep up, miss, and we shall see not so much as a mast of her in the morning."

"Then we are saved indeed!" whispered a voice.

But it was not the one I expected to hear, and, on speaking again, I found that Miss Mary had given up at last, and was now sobbing in the bottom of the boat, while her sister—the poor, timid, weak girl—had roused up directly, and was soothing and comforting her who had held up so bravely all through the greatest of the danger.

I could only speak to them and say a word now and then, to comfort them up as well as I could; for I knew that the greatest kindness I could render them was to stay at my post, and send the boat through the water at her greatest speed; and I never moved once that night.

After a bit my attention was taken off, for it seemed to me that the wind sank, and I felt my heart sink too, for it was like losing sight of life again; and I knew that I could do nothing with the oar, even if Tom had been well enough to have done his spell, poor fellow! Just before, the bright stars quivered as the keen breeze dashed between us and them, the waves curled over and broke in a foam that sparkled with soft light, and the boat, as it leaped from swell to swell, careened over and tugged at the rudder, while now the sail was flapping against the little mast, and, as I sat, it seemed to cast a shadow over me, dark as it was, and to be like the coming of some great death-bird brooding over us, and telling us of the end.

How can I tell of the strange misery that came upon me, as I felt how hopeless and dependent we were on the soft breath of heaven, which could send us to safety, while now it seemed withheld? And for half an hour, perhaps, I sat with my eyes staring back into the darkness in search of the old *Cross*.

I didn't cheer, but I could have got up and shouted and danced, for all at once the sail filled again, but only once more to flap idly against the mast. Another puff, and she filled again. No, it was no puff, but a steady gale; the boat bent over, and we darted on once more before the wind, at a rate that seemed to send new life through my veins every moment. Now down, now up, lightly, gracefully and easily as a sea-bird, we almost seemed to glide over the water; and after getting Miss Maude to hold the tiller for a few minutes, I shifted the ballast a bit, let out the reef, and then, showing the ladies how to trim, we darted on, the boat's stem dashing now through the tops of the waves, and often sending the spray pattering against the light sail.

"That's life and hope," I said to myself, as we dashed along.

And I grew quite excited, with the fancy on me that the *Cross* was in full chase. Why, if I could have set another sail I believe I should then, at all risks, as I tried to make out the time by watching the stars rise and set as we sailed on, anywhere—anywhere—to be farther away.

I woke up from a sort of waking dream of all that had taken place—trying to piece it together and to make a connected story of it all—to find Miss Mary sitting by me calm and still, and then Miss Maude came and sat in the bottom of the boat at my feet; and after a bit, in the silence of that bright night, when the thousands of stars seemed looking down

upon us smilingly, Miss Mary offered up a simple prayer—one so sweet, and thankful, and touching, that it brought a strange dimness over my eyes; but then I had been wounded, and was, of course, weak. I seemed to sort of wonder at the calm self-possession of the girl by my side—I say girl, for I don't think she could have been twenty—and I could not help thinking of what a mind she must have; and then I wondered what she thought of poor rough me.

You see, I'm telling you the plain, simple story of what happened, and what I thought; and so it may seem strange and weak to you. But why should I hold anything back? I'm not ashamed of my thoughts or acts, for I know I tried to do my duty right all the time, and if their father had been watching me, I could have gone up to him any day to the last, and smiled and pulled my forelock, ready for the nod and salute that I knew he would have been ready to give me. Perhaps he was watching over us all the time—who knows? But on we went, with no failing wind, and Miss Mary offered up a few simple words.

I'd heard prayers read often enough by captains I had sailed with, and been to church ashore; but I never heard words like these before, that seemed to move the heart, as they whispered our thanks for the preservation from the dreadful peril, asked for future help, and pardon for the desperate resolve we had made. Then came silence, when no words were spoken, for it seemed that our hearts were full, too full to speak; while the breeze bore us along gallantly, till at last the dull feelings wore off again with me, and my heart seemed to bound with the boat, and then more than ever I longed to have more sail to set.

After a while Miss Mary crept forward and saw to poor Tom, who still lay in a sort of heavy sleep. Poor chap! he seemed to have been neglected all this time; but what could we do for him, or what could he do for us, seeing how he was? Then Miss Mary came and forced some biscuit and wine and water upon me, that I did not feel to want; but I took it because it made an excuse for getting both the ladies to take some, and then I wanted them to lie down and try and get a little rest. But no; they both said that they would sit with me. And they did, too, all through that long night, when the breeze never once more failed, but bore us bravely on and on, with hopeful feelings coming stronger, till we saw the stars pale, the glow in the east, and the sun once more leapt up and shed his golden path right across the wide waters now dancing with life.

Although we were going so free, as the sun rose I lowered the sail, mast, and all; and then, when there was the full daylight, I looked round long and anxiously for the ship, sweeping the offing in all directions.

I wouldn't speak for some time—I wanted to be sure; for to have said that we were safe, and then find afterwards that I had missed seeing her from want of care, would have been terrible to those poor things. So I stood up for long enough, sweeping the offing, and waiting till the sun had risen higher; but there was not a mast in sight, and so I told those

anxious ones, whose lips were quivering, and who dared not ask the question.

"Not a sail in sight!" I said cheerily.

And I stepped the little mast, and up with our bit of canvas once more, when away we went over the bright dancing waters; but I altered our course, sailing sou'-west, and thinking that it would be better, since it was possible that the old *Cross* might be running before the wind, and would overhaul us.

I had no other reason as I changed the course; and I don't know then that I had even made a plan. We had no compass, and no idea where we lay, only that we were hundreds of miles out of the ship's course in the wide Pacific; and as to making port, or being picked up, that I did not think of; for the very sight of a sail in the offing would have made me run from it as if for our lives. No—I had no plans then; but in the change and brightness, the warm sunshine, and the quick gliding motion of the boat, I could not help looking at the pale face by my side, and, in spite of telling myself of my folly, thinking of how sweet it would be to go on sailing like that for ever and ever.

But directly after there came another change over me, and I felt bitter, and sorrowful, and dull; and I couldn't tell myself why it was, unless it was because I was such a poor, common man, though it never seemed to me to matter before.

CHAPTER XVIII.—A BREAK IN THE NARRATIVE— HOW THE GOLD WAS MELTED.

PHILLIPS, the second man in power in the gold plot, took command of the ship on the death of Hicks, while his rage and mortification knew no bounds on finding that after lying-to all night there was not a trace of the cutter in sight. The first boat that had left the ship had not been seen since; and there was a probability that the miserable crew might be picked up before their stores failed. However, Phillips troubled himself not about that; but by bullying his half-drunken companions made sail, and then tacked about, in the hope of meeting with the escaped prisoners; while his forehead lowered as he opened and shut the hand which lay upon the bulwarks as he looked out seaward. He had possession of the ship, and the treasure was there ready for sharing; but at present it seemed perfectly useless, for, though possessed of some little knowledge of navigation, picked up when acting as supercargo before he was transported, yet Hicks was the mainspring of the whole affair, and it was to his seafaring experience that they had all trusted when the ship should be theirs.

Days passed, and the orgies of the strange crew were frightful; but even in their most drunken times attention was given to the ship, though but for the gentle breezes her awkward handling must have resulted in ruin. At one time Phillips would curse the liquor as he saw one of the men fetch a quantity from the spirit-room; then he would solace himself by an application to the same evil, and, sitting down before the charts in the captain's cabin, stick the points of the compasses through them, and puzzle his spirit-steeped brains as to where the ship lay, and where he had better try to take her. One hour he would have settled her position as being

north or south of the equator a couple of thousand miles, in the Atlantic; the next hour she was in the Pacific; while he turned pale once with fear on seeing a low cloud in the horizon, towards which they were sailing, for he told himself it must be Australia, and the port from which they sailed. There were men on board who could have helped him, but Johnson was raging with fever, supervening from a cutlass wound, and the finger of Death seemed to have set its seal upon his guilty forehead; while the others, when appealed to, laughed and held up the pannikins of grog, and called upon him to drink.

About midnight of the fourth night since the escape of the Major's daughters, Phillips sat in the cabin with the charts before him. The night was dark, though the stars shone brightly, and through the open windows their gleam could at times be seen flashing from the water. On the table lay one of the useless charts, soaked with spirits and water, while the faint sickly odour of the spilt rum mingled with the smoke of the ill-trimmed cabin-lamp.

Phillips seemed ill at ease; and though he drank heavily, the spirits seemed to possess no stimulus. His forehead was damp, from the dread of some impending calamity; and he shivered and stared uneasily about him, as if expecting to see others than himself in the cabin. Once he lit a piece of paper, and held it down close to the clean white boards where the carpet did not cover, and looked at the stains till the paper burned out, and the dark ashes fell upon the spot where the captain's blood had soaked in. Then he drew the carpet carefully over the spot, shuddered again, drank fiercely from



the bottle upon the table, and began walking up and down the narrow cabin. He shut the window, looked at the berth as if half determined to lie down, but turned away again and walked to the door, where he stood listening to the howled chorus

of a song. He turned and paced hurriedly up and down the cabin, wiped his forehead again and again, and then stopped, trembling and clutching at the table to keep from falling—presenting the most abject specimen of terror imaginable; for, as he started, there suddenly rang out upon the calm night one of the most hideously unearthly shrieks that ever fell upon human ear. It was a mingling of horror, fear, and despair—a cry that it seemed impossible that human organs could have uttered—wild, piercing, and awful, so that the very blood chilled, and the energies seemed frozen in those who listened.

Another, and another, and another frightful shriek, and then they came incessantly, as if from many throats, and from different parts of the vessel; and Phillips clung to the table, feeling that the powers of darkness must have seized upon the ship, till an irresistible force urged him forwards and up the cabin stairs, where, like the drunken men from the fore-castle, he stood trembling on the deck, as a fiery figure rushed here and there, uttering the frightful shrieks he had heard.

Sobered as he was, he could associate the flaming figure with nothing else but the nether regions, as it darted here and there in wild evolutions, till all at once it was seen to spring upon the bulwarks, hold on by the shrouds for a few moments, and then, after lighting up the deck in a hideous manner, spring overboard, when there was darkness once more; and men drew their breath more freely as they shudderingly asked one another what the visitation meant. And the answer soon came.

The men had been drinking more heavily than usual that night, and at last one of the drunken ruffians had gone with a light to the spirit-room for more liquor, when, completely overcome, he had fallen on the floor, saturating himself with the spirits he had in his hand, and leaving the spill out of the cask; for, using a large gimlet freely, they had disdained the use of the copper spirit-pump. There the man lay—one of the sailors that had shipped at Sydney—with the rum playing out upon him in a thin golden jet, soaking into his tarry canvas frock and trousers till they were drenched, and the spirit formed a pool in which lay his long unkempt hair.

"And while we've grog, we'll never say die," hiccoped the drunken ruffian, from whose frock the spirit did not remove the bloody stains placed upon it a few nights before, though it soaked it thoroughly; while little sputtering explosions could be heard as the spirit-pool enlarged its borders, sending out like a small lake a tiny golden rivulet here, another there, where the inequalities of the boards allowed; and now one had reached the overturned light the fellow had brought with him.

Another sputtering sound, and another, and then little flashes of blue light, which began to flicker, and play, and dance upon the surface of the tiny rivulet, and then to shrink back again. Then, once more dancing and fluttering like spirit-wings over the surface, and then gathering force and speeding along, and covering, as if by magic, the lake of rum, so that it shed a ghastly blue tint over the casks around.

Darting now, and leaping about, the blue flames

ran over the prostrate man, while mingled with them now were tongues of fire of a golden hue, then orange flames, and then those that were red, all plunging and darting about, with a strange, ghostly, fluttering noise, still like the spirit-wings of innumerable tiny demons.



Startled into sobriety at last by feeling the glowing embrace in which he was wrapped, the man now leaped to his feet, and rushed to the door yelling for aid, and uttering the frightful shrieks which had alarmed his companions; while from playing and dancing upon him, the wind-excited flames now began to rage and tear at him savagely, roaring as they rose in a pyramid of fire, and licked up the spirit and fed upon the tarry canvas, roaring again more savagely as the tortured wretch darted in his agony about the deck, his utterances no longer human as he shrieked for aid.

Then came the awful termination of the scene: the profound darkness falling more heavily upon the dazzled eyes of the horror-sobered ruffians, who waited for the answer to their question—what did the visitation mean?

And the answer came quickly in the shape of sharp report after sharp report, and on running to the hatchways, there upon the lower deck, in one terrible stream of fire, the spirit was running along the ship—a stream momentarily increasing in fury; while now came a terrible explosion, which shattered all around; and for a few moments all was blackness, for the flames seemed extinguished. But then came the reaction, as, with a fierce, throbbing rush, blue, gold, orange tongues of fire leaped along in all directions, fastening upon everything within their reach, running fiercely, and very soon rising in a pillar up one of the hatchways, and threatening the cordage and sails about.

"Water! buckets!" shouted Phillips, recovering his presence of mind, as he saw the extent of the danger, and that the supernatural was only due to

his own fears; but no man responded to his commands, for panic had seized them, and they were tumultuously tearing at the longboat, which lay amidships.

"One try, my lads, first!" shouted Phillips, seizing a bucket himself, for he thought of the boxes of rich, red gold which lay close by the spirit-room; and after the dangers he had gone through to call himself the owner of the spoil, he could not find it in his heart to leave it without a struggle. But his example was useless, and, grinding his teeth, he dashed the bucket savagely into the flames, just as another loud report shook the ship, and after a short pause the flames leaped up more fiercely than ever, lighting up sails and mast, rigging and loose cordage, while a ring of light seemed to shine round upon the surrounding darkness.

"Dat dam nigger got him dose fuss, though, for setting ship on fire," growled black Rob; "um wish um had him here!"

But no one took any notice of the negro's savage grin; for water, spirit, and biscuit were being hurriedly thrown into the boat, which, after great delay, they hoisted by means of tackle rigged up very clumsily for the purpose. Once they were nearly swamping her from the want of management, but she was at length lowered safely into the water, when a rush was made for her, and the men scrambled safely down, when Phillips exclaimed—

"Where's Johnson?"

Where, indeed? In one of the cabins, with the flames darting at the door, and the smoke and heat each moment becoming more unbearable.

"Put me aboard again!" shouted Phillips.

And seizing the rope which hung from the side, he swung himself up to the deck, and rushed to the cabin hatchway.

The fear and hurry were needless, for it was evident that the ship would burn on yet for hours; but so great a dread had fallen upon the men, that not an attempt was made to save one chest of the yellow metal for which they had imbrued their hands in blood; and as soon as Phillips was again on board, they pushed off and lay-to at a short distance.

Gallantly and well was Phillips's act performed—an act showing that there was some good left in the man's nature; for, plunging through a rush of flame and smoke, he found his way into the heated cabin, and by almost superhuman effort dragged his comrade out, and bore him up to the deck, where he fell, and lay for a while panting and exhausted. Then he made his way to the side, and to his surprise found that the boat had been pushed off; and on ordering the men to come back, they only muttered among themselves, while it was very evident that Black Rob was for stopping the return of the boat.

It was a desperate position, and one which called for instant action. Lust of power was in the act of the black, and Phillips felt that if he had his way the boat would never return. To think was to act, for a few strokes of the oars would take them inevitably beyond his reach; so, drawing his revolver, he took deliberate aim and fired, when the bullet grazed the black's hand; for, full in the light of the burning ship, the men formed an excellent mark.

As Phillips fired, the black dropped down to shel-

ter himself behind his companions, who snatched at the oars in great confusion; but a second shot went right through the boat's side, while a third wounded a man in the fleshy part of the arm.

Phillips's hand was raised for a fourth shot, when the crew began hastily to back water, so that the boat was the next minute close alongside, and took off the two men, Johnson having to be slung down, when again the boat was pushed off, after Phillips had almost compelled the sulky party to take a few more necessities on board.

Lying-to, they now sat watching the progress of the fire, listening to the raging of the furnace that was smelting the gold ere it fell down, down hundreds of fathoms—miles, perhaps—to the sands at the bottom of the great Pacific; to lie there, perhaps, for ever; or, perchance, in some future upheaval to be a mass of gold in a foreign strata—a puzzle for the geologists of that latter day.

Heat gleaming and radiating from the burning ship; flames extending to the ropes and sails, so that the tar kept falling upon the deck in fiery flakes; rats making their way on deck, squeaking and leaping overboard, to swim about bewildered and frightened. Up rushed the flames in a roaring whirlwind of fire, smoke, and sparks, lighting all around, while the vessel gently rocked and rolled as sail after sail was burned away. Every now and then some part of the blazing rigging fell with a crash upon the deck, scattering sparks in all directions: now it would be a block or mass of rope; now a huge spar; and all adding to the blaze in the after-part of the vessel; while ever leaped up the flames, till the whole ship seemed one pyramid of glowing heat—the smoke, too, now rushing from the cabin windows.

The waters round the vessel hissed and boiled as the flakes of fire dashed in, and above the moaning of the wind came the rush and exultant roar of the flames, as in a waving pillar, mingled of many-tinted smoke and golden flakes, they floated off before the wind, a fearful signal of the danger, had another vessel been in sight; and everywhere round shone the fire, reflected back, as it were, from the dense wall of darkness.

"Row!" said Phillips, in a harsh tone of voice, as he played with the lock of his revolver, tapping the nipples, and all the while keeping his eye fixed on the black.

So the men rowed on till they felt that they would be clear of the vortex caused by the sinking ship; when they again lay-to, and watched her hour after hour as she burned slowly down towards the water's edge; and amidst the pile of fire, first one and then the other of the tall masts tottered down, to be quenched in the sea; while the short jury mizen went early in the fire, and like its fellows, lay over the side, huge sticks of blackened charcoal; and there lay the ship, a golden skeleton, whose ribs gleamed and shone upon the lurid waters.

Hours after they lay-to and watched—watched in a strange, spiritless way, as if robbed of all effort, till at last the long-expected movement came in the glowing vessel. She rolled gently for a little while; there was a dense cloud of steam arose; and then the water appeared to creep slowly up her sides,

and the golden skeleton, with its golden treasure, disappeared from view, leaving all dark and silent, while the boat rocked with the disturbance of the water.

CHAPTER XIX.—HOW THE FUGITIVES LANDED.

I MANAGED to make a bit of an awning with the sheets and the oars, and on we bounded all day, for the wind still held good, keeping as steady as could be. The ladies slept by turns, and watched by Tom by turns; for he, poor fellow, seemed to be getting worse, and we able to do no more for him than tend him lovingly—and we did, too, for he had been like a brother to me, though a bit put out and hurt about that poor lass, who never had a thought of mine, not once. But it all seemed of no use, and the poor fellow lay at last quite light-headed as I stood by him at night, having downed the sail for a minute; but I had it up again directly, and on we went once more, faster than ever.

But it was of no use, I could do no more. I kept up to the very last, and until I found myself going to sleep every minute, when, seeing how I was, Miss Mary took the tiller out of my hand, and, declaring that she had watched me and could steer, begged that I would lie down and rest.

I didn't want to give in, but I had been in a drowsy, stupid way all day, and knowing that I must sleep sooner or later, I gave her a word or two of instruction, and then she promised to call me if there was the least need; when, after giving one look round just as the sun was sinking, I lay down, to be asleep in an instant—a deep sleep, for I was completely worn out with watching and anxiety. But I only seemed to have just lain down when I opened my eyes again, to see the sun rising, Miss Mary, pale and quiet-looking, with her little hands clasping the tiller, and the boat still going free before the wind.

I jumped up; for I was savage and ashamed of myself at having lain there sleeping, and let that pale, wan girl steer all through the long night.

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.

And Manchester and Liverpool.

THE LOG OF JACK LAW.

A NEW YEARS YARN.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.



"I SAW TWO MEN COME OUT."—(Page 55.)

The Log of Jack Law.

A NEW YEAR'S YARN.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XIX.—HOW THE FUGITIVES LANDED
(continued).

I ASKED Miss Mary why she had not woken me. "I was only too glad to have been of some use," she said, smiling.

And then she gave me the tiller; and after she had seen to poor Tom again, and given me some biscuit and wine, she left her sister talking to me, and lay down as calmly and quietly as if she had been safe in her old home; and as I watched her eyes close, and her little face looking worn and weary, there came a sweet, peaceful look over it, and a smile upon her lips, which just parted. And as she lay there, under the rough awning, open so that I could then see all through, the sun sent a glow through the covering, which hung round her as it were, and lit up her bright, golden hair till I let fall the sheet at the end where I was steering, and would not look at her, for I felt that I had no right.

Another day, and another, and then days and days, and still we had sailed on and on over the boundless ocean; and another day breaking, when up rose the sun, gilding the calm sea, and flushing the light clouds far up in the sky; and I stood up, as I often did, to have a good sweep round of the offing; and this morning I started, and then did not know whether to feel pleased, or angry, or sorry; for there, right before the boat's bows, I could make out the rugged peaks of some strange land—miles away yet, but still within easy reach. And now I began more than ever to feel the responsibility of my position, and to wonder what was best to be done. I began to think whether it would be safe to land, or whether it would not be better to alter our course, and go on sailing away.

"But where to?" I asked myself.

I did not know. But to have gone on, and on, and on, sailing over that bright sea with a voice that seemed to me like music in its sweet sadness ever ringing in my ears, and the sense strong upon me that she was always looking up to me for protection, and with her sister treating me as if I was their dearest friend—to have gone on like that seemed my sole wish.

But I knew that it must end some day, and why not soon as well as late? I asked myself this with a feeling of bitterness; and keeping to that, knowing all the while that it was my duty, I ran the boat for the shore.

Hour after hour passed, and the young ladies were eagerly watching the shore; for they had started when I cried, "Land, ho!" and could hardly think that the faint cloudy appearance was a distant island. The sun rose higher, and the heat grew oppressive, so that thirst came upon us; and poor Tom moaned till Miss Mary sat by him bathing his forehead and moistening his lips. Then the sun began to descend; and as we neared it, the rocky coast seemed to rise out of the water more and more, till at last we could see the heavy surf

beating against its perpendicular sides, so that landing seemed impossible; and as the night fell I lowered the sail, and lay waiting for the next day.

The next morning, as soon as it was light, I set the sail, and in the fresh glow of the bright sunshine we coasted along a short distance off, watching the beating surf, and the huge brown and grey rocks that seemed to run down into the sea; while in every hole and crack or rift, between piles of rough fragments, there was the most beautiful vegetation—waving palms, and tree-ferns, and cocoa-trees; while we were near enough to hear the sweet singing of the birds.

The ladies did not speak; but I saw their eyes brighten as they looked at the beautiful shore; and more than ever now I searched for a cove or sandy beach where we could land. But no; always the same—rough, steep rock, upon which the sea beat furiously, sending the white feathery spray far up on high, so that it glittered in the morning light.

No sign of inhabitant, and no sign of a place where we could land; but everywhere the heaving breakers and a shore where our light boat would have been stove to pieces in a very few moments.

We had sailed nearly round the island that day, feasting our eyes upon its beauties, wondering at the tall sugar-loaf mountain in the centre and the high-piled rocks, and ever feeling more and more anxious to land as we found how impossible it was; for we all seemed to think that this must be a spot where nature alone had lived—we had sailed nearly round the island, when we came upon a little bay protected by a ridge of coral, and formed on one side by a long rocky tongue of land, which ran out into the sea until it ended in soft piled-up sand, over which the water gently rose and fell; while upon the inner side the water was quite smooth, so that a boat could ride safely, and almost without motion. A little bright stream, too, came trickling down a rift, and shone like silver in the sun, as if to tempt us to drink, for our water was getting low.

I had run the boat pretty closely up, looking out for a spot where we could easily land, and at the same time eagerly watching along the shore for signs of inhabitants, who I knew would most likely be savages; but not a figure could I see. All at once, though, I started; for in a rift where the sea ran close up, was the hull of a ship, and for a moment I fancied it might be the old *Cross*; but a moment's look told me that it was a hull that had been there for some time; and I knew the stern of our old ship too well to mistake it for another. It was a wreck, sure enough; and this made me hesitate with such a charge by me, as I wondered whether any of the old crew might be ashore and living on the island, and what sort of people they would be.

But, as far as I could make out, there was no trace of living soul having ever been there.

It was a peaceful little spot where we lay, shaded by the towering rocks all round, sheltered from the breeze; while in a dull, hoarse murmur came the thundering and roaring of the sea, as it plunged into the hollows of the rugged coast.

"I'll land first," I said, dropping the little grapnel at a short distance from the shore—just so far off

from the end of the tongue of rock and sand that no one could reach them without swimming.

And then letting myself over the side of the boat, I swam to the sandy spit, and walked up, picking my way amongst the rough pieces of stone and grey bits like cinders, while some hollows were quite full of light ashy stuff. I made my way inland, after looking down from the rock where I had climbed upon the old ship, which seemed as if no human being had trod her planks since the savage waves lifted her into her present position during some terrible storm; and then, after stumbling and slipping about for long enough, I got amongst the trees and undergrowth, pushing on to find out, if possible, whether it would be safe to bring the ladies ashore, if only for a day or two, by way of recruiting health, while I laid in fresh water, and tried to increase our stock of provisions.

I didn't know how far I had penetrated, and had hardly noticed how the time went, when all of a sudden, upon turning a great piece of rock, I came upon a beautiful green and flowery opening, sheltered on all sides by the great hills, while the tall trees gently waved in the golden sunshine. It seemed to me like the beginning of a valley, which I expected would run right through the island; and I walked on for some distance; and then, leaning against the rock in a dreamy way, strange thoughts came into my brain again—wild thoughts, mixed up with which was a sort of vision of Miss Mary walking by my side, and clinging to my arm as we passed under the beautiful green ferns, where the sun made a golden network upon the bright springing plants below. Then in an instant the vision was gone, and the sweat came out upon my face, for between me and the narrow rift by which I had entered the valley, I saw two men come out of a dark opening, and stand for a moment in the sunshine, and then disappear.

The sight of fellow-creatures might have been thought to be welcome—and so I believe the sight would have been, if I had not known one of the men I saw to be Black Rob, whom I had left on board the old *Cross*. Any other man I could, perhaps, have been deceived in; but the great bulky figure of the negro it was impossible to have seen once and then not remembered.

What was I to do? Get back and push off at once, for we had sailed right into the lion's jaws; and I was sorely puzzled to make out how they had got here, for there was no sign of the ship, nor yet of their boat; though it was quite possible that there was some little creek or cove which I had not seen. But then how was I to get back unseen, and that, too, at once? for I now thought of the poor girls' anxiety; while there was the danger of the boat being seen. And on this thought coming to my mind, it was only by a struggle that I kept myself from darting away towards the shore.

There seemed no way back but in front of the opening where I had seen the two men; while how I had managed to come by unperceived was puzzling.

I put the right thought upon it, though, and that was that they had been lying down asleep; for as I knelt there, peering between some thick leaves which sheltered me from sight, I saw three or four

more saunter out, stretching themselves and yawning; and now it seemed that my retreat was regularly cut off.

I was mad and angry with myself for being so careless; for here I was like in a trap—the valley where I was being a sort of basin, whose sides seemed everywhere impassable, and an attempt at climbing would have ensured my being seen directly. Bright as the place had before looked, crowned here and there by groves, or sunny flower-sprinkled slopes that put one in mind of the home country, yet now it looked to me like some hideous spot, where I had brought those poor girls through my careless blundering.

There was nothing else for it but to lie hidden where I then was, and remain in hopes of the men not going down to the shore, when, as soon as it was dark, I could perhaps manage to creep by them and reach the boat unperceived.

Twice I trembled, for I saw men come out of what I now made out to be a sort of cave in the side of the steep face of the rocks, and when they made as if going shoreward I crept in their track, winding along through the grass almost like a snake; but they seemed to be quite aimless in their wanderings, and soon returned towards the opening, nearly coming upon me as I lay amongst the undergrowth.

If it had not been for an open lawn-like piece of grass that lay just in front of them, I could have escaped; but as it was, I could only wait on impatiently hour after hour till the night was closing in; and now my heart rose, for I began to feel that soon if they went to the shore the boat would be invisible.

Darkness at last; and, with the bearings of the place well fixed in my mind, I rose to go, my heart beating, and a feeling of sorrow strong upon me concerning the anxiety of those I had left behind. I had cursed again and again the unlucky hour which brought us there, while to have gone again through the suspense I felt, tied down as it were, and expecting every moment that the boat was in danger of being seen, was more than I think I could have borne.

I crept through the bushes, making as little rustling as I could, and was about to step out in the open, when all at once there was a fresh stoppage in the shape of the bright light of a fire which the men had lit, and round which they seemed to be carousing; while, near as I now was, I could see that they seemed well supplied with grog and provisions, and as I saw that, my ideas seemed somehow to turn to the stranded ship, though everything in connection with the men being here was a regular puzzle to me.

Creeping cautiously along, I found that I was obliged to go much nearer to the fire than I liked, but there was no other chance unless I waited till they had gone to sleep, and even then a watch might have been kept. But I could not bear the suspense any longer, and seizing what I considered a favourable opportunity, I made a quick leap forward, but tripped, fell, and rolled over, while, before I was well upon my feet again, a couple of the men were in my path, and by the light of the fire I made them out to be Phillips and the negro.

I never have a good recollection afterwards of any fights that I have been in, and I suppose it is from the excitement; but I've just some idea of a sharp, short struggle as I leaped down upon the two men, and then of tearing through the bushes and



stumbling amongst fragments of rock. But it was as bad for those who chased me as for me, and after the first minute's surprise, during which I think they took me for a wild beast, several of them were after me, howling and shouting close behind.

The darkness and the rough ground made hard work of it, without trees to stand right in your way, and bushes which seemed made on purpose to tear at and drag you back; but knowing how all depended on my getting down first to the shore, I dashed on. Now I was nearly over a great stone, now I was quite thrown, and sometimes only gained my feet to fall again. Then I thought the noise of the men after me was less loud, and my spirits rose; but the next moment a shout close at hand made them fall as I pushed on, with the breath coming hard and fast with the exertion, so that anyone near could have heard me panting like a hunted beast.

All at once I stopped, for I could make out, as I thought, that I was not in the gully which led down to the shore. I could not recollect a great pillar-like piece of rock standing right in my way, and for a moment or two I stopped, hesitating as to whether I should turn back or no. But there was no turning back, on account of them closing up behind; and after all, this gully I was now in—a deep, dark gully, walled on both sides with rock, and between which the stars peered down—this gully might perhaps after all lead to the shore. At all events, I knew I must push on; and I did, till I seemed to come to a wall of rock, which shut me in, and up whose steep face it was useless to try and climb, for I only tore my hands in the struggle.

The thought of being caught there like a rat in a trap seemed to make me furious, and I turned, listening to the coming shouts, almost in despair that they were so near; when above them I could hear plainly the long, low, moaning noise of the sea upon the shore. Another trial, first along the wall

of rock one way, and then along it the other, and this time to find a way into another gully like a huge split in the rocks—a strange, wild place at such a time and by such a light; but there was the salt breath of the sea upon my lips, and instead of the faint murmur, now came plainly upon my ear the ocean's hoarse roar.

Another stop, and another listen, and now it seemed that I had got ahead of those who were hunting me; and after all that was no wonder, for no man but one running for his life would have torn through what I did. And yet I did not like running, for it made me fierce and savage: I should have liked to have stopped and faced some of them; but I could not afford it, and I was unarmed.

On the shore at last, amongst the rough stones and pieces like cinder, through which I made my way cautiously; for the night seemed darker than ever, and I had come out in a different part of the bay shore to that where I had gone in. But, fortunately for me, the waves curled over as if all on fire, and wherever they struck there was a soft light which shone out in the darkness of the night, teaching me the shape of the coast. Wherever a piece of rock lay, there the waters were leaping and fretting and boiling over it, to fall again in a regular shower of bright sparkles; while what was greatest of all for me was, that, just marked out by a little rippling of light, there was the long tongue of rock and sand running out into the sea, and fringed like with pale fire.

I could not see the boat, but I remembered well enough where she lay; and now I could make out the little spit of land, I felt hopeful of getting off unseen as I pushed on amongst the rough pieces of rock. Another hundred yards would, I felt, do it; and, hurrying over a stretch of sand, I was upon the rugged spit, picking my way along, and listening, as I did so, to the sounds behind. I should have shouted to the ladies by way of encouragement, but I knew it would be like telling of my whereabouts; so I crept on as fast as I could, when all at once I stopped, stricken helpless as it were, for a tall figure had just leaped up in my path, and as I halted it sprang at me.

CHAPTER XX.—HOW JACK LAW SWAM FOR HIS LIFE.

IT was enough that to check any man who had as much at stake as I had. The great danger had seemed past, and I thought that my pursuers were all far behind; but now it was evident that this one had reached the shore by the other way.

I was so startled and taken aback at first that I felt helpless; but the next moment there was a fierce struggle going on between me and the black; for though it was too dark to make out features, there was no mistaking the great fellow as he struck sharply with his knife, and then closed with me in a fight for life and death. He had the best of it at first, for he had hold of my throat, and came on so fiercely that I was borne backwards; but I had hold of the hand which clutched the knife, and it seemed to me now that the life or death of four people depended on the possession of that blade. But he knew it too, and in the next few minutes the

struggle was all for that bit of steel; when, having recovered myself a little, I got a foot behind him, and gave him a fall, and, to my great delight, I found, as we struggled up, that the knife was gone.

That was a fierce tussle there amongst those rough pieces of rock; and the black fought more like a wild beast than like a man, tearing at my hair, and more than once fastening on to me with his teeth. Now I was getting the best of it, and then he was; and then we were down on the loose stones again, rolling over, and twisting in and out like a couple of great snakes. Up again, fighting despairingly; for I expected each moment would bring down some more to Black Rob's help. But I meant to fight till the last gasp; and once more, when we had struggled upwards, we were rocking and swaying backwards and forwards till my muscles seemed swelled to bursting. Fortunately for me, I now had a fast hold of his throat, as much to keep him from shouting as anything, for else I should have tried some more of the old North-country wrestling falls with him. But all seemed to depend on his silence, and I clung to his throat spite of all blows, till it seemed to tell upon him; so that, giving a spring off the ground forwards, I dashed him back; and he went down, striking his head a fearful blow upon the rocks, where he lay quite still, the waves nearly washing up to his face, which showed plainly by the faint light as they broke, his teeth glistening, and his great opal eyes glaring as he lay stunned and motionless.

I was free once more, and knelt there upon the rough stones trembling and weak, trying to find out how near were my pursuers. I could hear voices; but they did not seem to be coming towards where I was, but rather to be rounding the little bay. And there I knelt listening, while the wind sighed gently, the distant surf roared, and the golden-spangled waves curled gently upon the shore, shedding their pale light, and making the stones rattle as they rolled over and drove the water-worn pieces against the big rocks, from which they seemed to shrink.

It was of no use to be weak, and I beat it down; and creeping forward from rock to rock, I hurried along the little point, till I got to where it was all sand nearly, when I pushed on faster, for now it seemed that the shouts were growing louder, and the men were calling Black Rob as they came towards the spit of land I was on. I knew they could not see me, or the pursuit would have been hotter; but more than once I fancied that I could make out figures upon the shore moving under the shadows of the great rocks, though out seaward I could not catch sight of what I so eagerly looked for—by which, of course, I mean the boat.

I had slipped and stumbled over all the weedy pieces of rock now; and rousing myself for the last rush, I went over the sand fast, and at last stood at the end looking over the sea with my hand sheltering my eyes.

Yes, there she lay, about fifty fathoms off, and I could just make her out as she rose and fell against a light patch of sky. I was just wading in, when a loud yell behind startled me. It was like the cry of raging men; and I pushed on, with the water

rising higher and higher; for I knew that they had come upon the black.

I did not know how weak and worn I was till I had waded to where the next wave brought the water to my chest; and then I was swimming and forcing my way through the cold, pleasant water, which seemed to give strength to my weary limbs.

"Would they have seen me? Could they make me out swimming?" I thought, as I swam on as quietly as I could.

Once I could lay my hand upon the gunwale of the boat, I felt that we were safe, for there was a breeze off the shore that made the waves dance pleasantly. They might try to swim after me, I thought; but I did not fear that, the next moment feeling sure that no man would dare it on such a night—dark as pitch; while now I found a new difficulty to contend with—the tide was running in fast, and a sharp current set round the bay and bore me along at a rate that I could hardly fight against, and I began to fear whether I should not be swept right out of my course.

I swam on, turning on my side, and making as powerful strokes as I could; but it was fearfully hard work for a tired man. Thinking of it now, it seems to me that any strong swimmer would have found it a task, and therefore I'm not surprised that I should have had such a tussle.

Swim, swim, swim, and such a little distance too, for the stream ran like a mill-race. Every time I rose on a wave I looked out for the boat; but it was so dark I could not see her, and I did not dare to call out, for fear of being heard ashore. But at last, finding that I must be quite far enough out, and only fighting against the current to hold my own, I called out—

"Miss Mary, Miss Mary!"

And the answer came directly, but from so far off that an icy chill shot through me, and for a few moments I was as good as lost. But I roused up and called again—



"Drag up the little anchor."

And the water came bubbling in my mouth and up my nostrils, for a wave broke against me. Then I struck out boldly once more, fighting hard for my life, as I heard the chain grating over the boat's

bows, and knew that she would be floating down the current in a moment or two. There was the last rattle of the chain, and my ears were painfully strained to catch the next sound as, lower and lower in the water, panting and sobbing, I struggled against the current, trying all the while to pierce the gloom in front in the hope of seeing the boat come floating down.

Moments that seemed as long as hours, as I threw out my failing arms to battle with the current. The water rose to my lip, but I spat it fiercely away; and for a last despairing spurt I rose in the sea, gave a few strokes, and then, feeling that I was spent, I turned upon my back to try and float for a few minutes longer.

"Boat!" I cried, huskily, "boat!"

And, as if at my ear, a voice answered—
"Here!"

When I felt my hand grasped, and, raising the other, I thrust it over the side of the cutter, when it was seized by another pair of soft hands, and I hung there for some moments before I could get rid of the burning pangs in my chest, and draw my breath again without sobbing.

We could hear voices still on shore; but the current was sweeping us rapidly away, and soon all was still but the lapping of the water, when I managed to climb in, and gladly drank the wine I felt Miss Mary push into my hand, for I was cold and shivering. I soon revived, though, and lost no time in stepping the mast, and getting the sail up once more, so that the boat went free before the wind. And then, as I held the tiller, I sank into a dim, misty state, in which I kept asking myself whether it was all true; while the ladies, hardly able to get a word from me then, sat patiently by my side, knowing that I had been in some great danger, but not being able to find out what, though they told me again and again of their anxiety and fears for my safety. Once only that night I seemed to come thoroughly to myself, and that was when I heard a sob close by me in the dark, and I seemed to know that it was Miss Mary crying.

But all through that weary night, in a sort of fever, I was swimming on and on close to the boat's stern, knowing that two good, bold, vigorous strokes would do it, and I should be saved. Seeing it all over and over again, and feeling that I could not take those strokes, for the current swept me right off past the boat—right off into the darkness of the night; while the waves rose and fell, as, from an opening in the dark clouds, the stars looked down. Then there seemed to be a long, low, soft sigh sweep across the sea, rising and falling, as if mourning for me because I was drowned. Then I fancied that the night had passed, and the morning had broken cold and pale over the sea, when the winds began to lash the waves and make them leap and tear up the sand, which they were gathering together and then piling up where I could see it. Busy waves, too: they were sweeping in and piling up the white sand, and sweeping in and piling up more and more, on the shores of a beautiful coral island, where the cocoa-nut trees waved like feathery plumes, and cast down light shadows, where I seemed to lay calm and still in that long sleep that I had fought so hard to keep

off; and there, in long, low sweep, came in the waves, piling over me the glistening sand, till it lay heaped, and my face was covered. It did not seem to trouble me, though I seemed to be seeing it all; and I thought it was a quiet bed for one who had spent so many years upon the sea, and could not be better suited for a man who had been a simple common sailor.

I woke at last, when the glow was coming again in the sky, and I was where I had sunk down in the boat, my head resting against Miss Mary, who held the tiller, and it was some time before I could drive off the heavy, misty, feverish feeling, and tell them both of my adventures and narrow escape; when they shuddered, and looked back towards the island, now glistening in the sun, for the tops of the sugar-loaf points shone white. But that same night saw us once more out of sight of land, sailing on before the breeze.

CHAPTER XXI.—HOW TOM SAID GOOD-BYE.

MINE seems a strange story, but I am fast nearing its end; for it is only of that voyage homeward, and the cruise in the little boat. The history of my encounter with Phillips and his party on the island frightened the ladies terribly, but the fear soon went off; and then we talked the matter quietly over together, and could only come to the conclusion that they had, in some way or other, been wrecked and gone ashore there. But all we wanted was to escape; and so we sailed on for days and days, steering, as well as I could judge, in the hopes of making either Australia or New Zealand, though I was very wide of my reckoning, as it proved afterwards. Sometimes I was in hopes of running across the course of some vessel; but the next minute I'd be hoping that it might not be yet for another day or two.

Poor Tom had been tended with all the care that we could give him; but, in spite of all we did, he grew worse and worse, and at last, when he got his senses again, he was so weak, and spoke in such a whisper, that we could hardly catch his words as he lay there, with his head propped up, talking to us a good deal; and he did not seem at all sorrowful or unhappy, though he told me he knew that he was going.

"I've been no good to you," he said to Miss Mary, as she was kneeling down crying by his side one evening, when there was not breath enough to make the sail flap; "I've been no good to you; but I did what I could, miss."

Poor Tom! he was quiet then for a bit, when he turns his head to me, and he says—

"Put her head a bit more to the west, Jack," he says; "and you'll find land sooner."

Then he just managed to get hold of Miss Mary's hand, and kissed it; when he says again—

"Jack, old mate," he says, "you've had it all to do, and you've got it to finish; and I won't ask my old mate to be what a sailor should be. I won't ask my old mate to swear; but you'll do what's right by them, Jack, won't you, lad?"

"Ay, lad," I says, "I will, and swear it, too, if you like."

And the water came in my eyes as I spoke, for

the young ladies were crying bitterly, and there was something about his way of speaking as made me think as the end was very nigh, indeed.

"Then I shall go easy, Jack, mate; for I'm a-going to give up the number of my mess."

And then again he was silent for a bit, till Miss Mary sobbed quite aloud, and said she was going to lose a dear, true, faithful friend.

"No, miss," says Tom, sadly, "only a poor sailor, miss, as tried to do his duty by you, and broke down; but Jack, here, will take my watch. And God bless you all; for I don't think I shall see the sun go down again."

"Come, Tom," I says, "try and look up, mate. Luff a bit, luff; take up another spoke or two, old lad, and ease her over the next wave, and she'll weather it yet."

I said it to cheer him a bit, but it was done in such a melancholy way that the poor chap only smiled sadly.

"It was that chap Hicks as did for me, matey," he says.

And then he looked hard at me, and made believe to be washing his hands, and we understood one another, for he looked at me as he did that morning when he told me to wash the blood off my face; and, somehow or another, I couldn't help feeling glad that I'd made an end of the murdering villain who gave my poor mate his death-blow.

And there poor Tom lay—half sleeping, half waking—all through that calm night; for the sail never even flapped, and I sat watching him hour after hour, while the ladies slept. Just as the sun was about to rise, though, he seemed to quite wake up with a start, as if he had been called, and kept looking out eastward.

"What is it, mate?" I says, lifting his head on to my arm, so that he could look easier.

"Put her head a bit more to the west, Jack," he says, with a smile; and then he says, as if talking to himself—"Poor gal, poor gal! so young and so handsome! Jack, old mate, did you see her lying in that berth, just as if asleep?"

He said those last words to me, and I nodded, for I couldn't speak; and I thought I heard the young ladies coming forward, for the boat rocked a little.

"Good-bye, Jack, lad; you can take my ring off my handkercher. And," he says, "I'm sorry I ever thought you weren't a true mate, Jack; but I can see it all now. But it won't do, Jack, lad," he says, "it can't never be. God bless 'em—God bless 'em! Tell 'em I'm ordered aloft, Jack," he whispered; "and put her head a bit more to the west."

And then, with quite a smile upon his face, he seemed to look straight away at the sun, which was shining on his face, and I didn't know as he'd gone off into his long sleep till I heard the young ladies sobbing behind me; when I laid poor Tom's head back on the pillow, and shut his honest old eyes, and then pulled off my handkercher and covered his face.

I sat in the bottom of the boat for some time with my face down in my hands, for Tom Everard and I were old shipmates.

CHAPTER XXII.—HOW RESCUE CAME—IN SAFETY.

THAT was a heavy pull upon our little ship's company; and when I had got the better of what made me lay my hands on my face, I roused up and looked round at the ladies, who had been crying silently together. But as soon as they saw me up and doing, they each took a hand and sat by me a bit, till I roused up to do what I knew my poor mate would have liked, and what he would have done by me: I lashed him up in one of the sheets, with a shot at his feet, one that had been in the boat for ballast. And at sundown Miss Mary knelt, and we knelt behind her, as once more she closed her eyes and turned her face up to the sky and said some prayers over the poor fellow; when, with a more sorrowful heart than I ever felt before, I hove my poor mate overboard, and then sat down alone in the bows, feeling as I didn't care how soon it was me as was called, for I felt sore at heart. But I soon remembered what I had promised to poor Tom, which was, to do my duty by them as was in my charge; when more of his words came up, and seemed a'most to stab me as I thought of them, and the way in which he spoke, and said as it couldn't never be. And I knew it well, and that made me down and sorrowful, too; but I roused up again once more, and tried to make all things ship-shape as I waited for the wind, which came at last; and on we dashed, with the boat seeming to leap over the waters.

"Put her head a bit more to the west, Jack," said poor Tom, and of course I did; and taking turn and turn with me, Miss Mary gave me a watch below, or of course I couldn't have held up. And one day, about the third after poor Tom gave up his number, I was dreaming about what was really the case—and that was that the water was nearly out—when I felt my arm shook; and waking up in a fright, I found that Miss Mary had thrown the wind out of the sail, and there she was looking horrified like at a vessel standing right across our course.

She did not speak to me; but I could read a deal in her frightened face, while I turned from her to have a good look at the stranger.

"Frigate," I says at last. "Man-o'-war, I should say, too—English by her rig."

"What, not the *Cross*?" she said, clasping her hands.

"No," I says, taking the tiller and running down towards the stranger.

And though we were just out of water and far from land, I could not help doing it with a heavy heart, for it seemed to me that there was a great change coming. But those two loving hearts were together; and when I saw them kneeling and praying, I kept my eye fixed on the frigate, and wouldn't let them see what was passing in my mind.

And that was hard work, too, for such a man as I was then, for I'd never been taught in any way to rule myself, or keep down what I felt. There had been certainly some strange hard teaching in the workus school, and I had been pretty well knocked about in life; but I never was able to do much at hiding my thoughts, though I fought hard then.

That boat never seemed to dash along so before.

She always was swift; but now the pace she went at seemed terrible, and every time she careened over to the wind my heart seemed to sink with the thoughts of the coming change. For the nearer we got, the plainer I could see that it was an English



ship, and I got reckoning in my own mind what was going to be. You see, I had been friend and companion, and trusted by father and daughters so long, that, leaving everything else out of the question, it seemed hard to give up the position; for I knew that as soon as ever we set foot on board that ship the ladies would be in the captain's cabin, with every officer on board ready to turn their slave.

"And where will you be, Jack Law, my lad?" I says to myself, bitterly—having, you know, the same sort of feelings as you well-educated people, only in the rough, and not polished up. "And where will you be, Jack Law?" I says, speaking to myself as what I was—only a rough, hard-working, foremast man. And after sitting thinking a bit, with my eyes fixed on that ship, that grew plainer every minute, I answered myself out aloud, and the words came with a sort of sob as I thought of what my position there would be; and I says to myself—"Nowhere!"

A good many thoughts went through my head as I sat there steering that day, and I went over again the different changes that had taken place, and the scenes we had gone through. Then I thought about the nearing of the old *Cross*, and the time when we bid one another good-bye, and it seemed that the end had come, only the darkness and that fresh breeze saved us. And there, in the bitterness of my heart, I sat steering, with a red flush on my face; I could feel it, and my temples throb at the same time. I thought of what I had determined to do, and—I couldn't help it—a feeling of misery came over me that made me think how far better it would have been if I had died with them there in the pale light of that evening, and gone where there was no more sorrow.

I had my fist up the next minute, for I was looking at those sisters sitting watching the ship; and if it had not been that I was afraid they would

think me strange, I should have hit myself a fierce blow in the face for thinking as I had done, and daring to feel that it would be better that they should have died because I was wild, and passionate, and selfish.

"You've had your bit of duty to do, my lad, and you've done it—perhaps well—perhaps ill—but at all events as well as you could; so don't go and spoil it," I says to myself.

Then I began to think about poor Tom, and his trouble and death; and it seemed to me that there was a deal of sorrow to be met with in this life, and what we had to do was to set to and face it as well as we could, and then, when it was over, try and enjoy what pleasure came to our share. You see, I reasoned with myself after my fashion, and tried to make myself think that one's life was a deal like a sea voyage, and made up of all sorts of weather. Now it would be calm; then a fresh breeze; and then perhaps a storm; while in our case it had been a regular hurricane. Well now, it aint reasonable to expect that a ship's going through even a storm, let alone a hurricane, without some damage—say a boat washed off, or a mast taken, or a few spars knocked away; so I asks myself what I had to grumble at. Here had I been through as fierce a hurricane of life as a man could well meet with, and I was coming off with a little soreness, and a cut on the head that was almost well; and then I swore as I wouldn't think any more of myself, but only of what should please the young ladies, who sat there watching, and with hearts too full to speak.

I swore that last bit to myself; but, like a many more people who make that sort of promise, I broke my oath over and over again, being, you see, a very weak, ignorant, foremast man, depending only upon my own strength.



A couple more hours and we were alongside, with the frigate's bulwarks crowded with officers and men, to see a little boat come in with a rough sailor for crew, and two beautiful, gentle ladies for passengers; and as we came close alongside they gave

us a cheer, and the young ladies both fainted. Miss Maude went first, and I saw Miss Mary trying to fight against it; but as we touched the ship's side down she went. And then the doctor came down and attended them: while the boat was hoisted up



in no time, in the clever, handy way they have of doing things aboard a man-o'-war, without any noise, or fuss, or swearing. Then the ladies were carried carefully to the cabin; and, rough as I was, I wasn't going to give up my place of helping, so I was one who helped carry Miss Mary, and no one tried to hinder me. And then, when the cabin-door was shut, and I was back up on the quarter-deck, I gave a great sob and staggered, for no doubt I was weak, and it seemed all over now.

They led me into the captain's cabin, and I had some wine; and then I sat there and told the captain and most of the officers the story of our sufferings—just in the same way as I've told you; and all the time the captain of that Queen's ship kept leaving his chair, and walking up and down the cabin, biting his lips and fidgeting till I'd done; and of course I did not say so much in what I told him about the young ladies as I have now, only keeping to the principal parts of my story.

After I'd done the captain came up and shook hands with me kindly, and so did all the officers; and the captain says—

"We sha'n't be able to part with you, my lad. If you'll stay with us I think we can find you a hammock;" when, seeing how surprised I looked, he says—"But there, there, we are in no hurry; get your strength recruited a bit."

Time went on fast then, as we sailed away; for I could give no bearings at all of the island where we had met the pirate party, and the captain of the frigate did not seem to like going on chance to try and find it. So away we went, and everyone was wonderfully kind and pleasant to me; while down on the main deck I might a'most have had every

fellow's grog, so eager were the chaps to show me a kindness, or to get me spinning the yarn over and over again, till I was tired of it, not liking to brag and boast, you know, and I always got away as much as possible. For, you see, sailors are a good deal like big children; and tell 'em a story as catches their fancy, or sing 'em a sea-song as tickles their ear, and they don't want anything fresh, but will ask for it over and over again; and, after all said and done, there's worse chaps than sailors, taking 'em as a rule.

I got to know that we were bound for the Cape first, where we were going to refit a bit, for the frigate had sprung her mainyard, and one of her topmasts, in I should say the same storm as we lost our mizen in the poor old *Cross*.

But it was very little I saw of the ladies, for they hardly left their cabin; while it was wonderful what respect the captain and officers paid them. But whenever they did come on the quarter-deck for a walk, it was mostly the gray-headed old captain or the first-lieutenant that was in their company, and walked and talked with them in that quiet, easy way you only see in a real gentleman. It didn't matter, though, who was with them if they caught sight of me, for they'd always run and shake hands, and stop talking with me whenever they had a chance; and all this seemed to make the officers as friendly to me as possible.

As to being rigged out by the ship's tailor, and all that sort of thing, that was one of the first bits of kindness I had on board; and the next time I met the ladies I was in regular man-o'-war blue frock



and trousers, 'long-shore togs and tarpaulin, with the frigate's name on the ribbon.

At last we got to the Cape, where the captain was going to land the ladies, not being homeward bound, but expecting despatches there to send him

off again for another year's cruise; and now that we had set the ladies ashore, I thought well over what the captain had said, and how I could not do better for myself, and I made up my mind that I'd join.

A few days after I had a little letter from Miss Mary, asking me to go and see them at a gentleman's house in the town where they were staying, till they could get a passage home to England; and when I went I felt more low and sorrowful than ever when I saw them both dressed in deep mourning, for it brought up again all the mishaps of that unlucky voyage, and poor Tom Everard's croakings before we started. But I tried to rouse up, for, though no scholar, and only a sailor, it seemed to me to be quite time to rouse up and wake myself from the wild dream I had been in—a dream as would keep coming upon me whenever I was alone, in spite of poor Tom Everard's words, which kept reproaching me.

So I spent an afternoon with them, and they made tea for me; but I couldn't touch it, neither could they, and when at last the time came and I said "Good-bye" to them, I told them of how I had joined the frigate. Then they made me promise that I would go and see them in England, and Miss Mary wrote me down an address where I could always hear of them. It was a sad afternoon that, and they both seemed cut to the heart to say the last words, and cried bitterly at parting.

But the words were said at last, and they each gave me a little ring to wear upon my handkercher for their sakes; and then as I stood at the door of that room, with the setting sun shining in, and reminding me of the scenes in our voyage, Miss Maude first put her little hands in mine, and then raised her tear-wet face as naturally and tenderly as a little child would to kiss me; and then Miss Mary, with her poor face working, put both her hands in mine—little white soft hands in my horny palms—and she too, with a loving, childlike innocence, and with the tears streaming down her face—she, too, kissed me, as a dear sister would a brother. But the next moment she was down upon her knees, kissing my hand, and sobbing loudly and passionately in a way that a'most broke my heart, as her sister knelt by her, trying to soothe and comfort her; while, with a feeling of something choking me, I rushed out of the house, for I was now thoroughly awakened from my dream.

CHAPTER XXIII.—HOW IT ENDED.

INSTEAD of one year, it was two years before we sighted old England; and one day, before I had been ashore, a'most as soon as we were in port, there was some one aboard, they said, wanting to see me. And soon after I was standing before a couple of gentlemen who had just left the captain's cabin, and had been shaking hands heartily with every officer they saw. One of them was a tall, big, upright, soldierly-looking, handsome young fellow, while the other was dark and pale and good-looking; but somehow I did not seem to take to him, although he tried to be as friendly as possible.

The soldierly-looking one shook hands with me heartily, and told me his name was Frederick Dean,

and that he was the poor old Major's nephew. And as soon as he said that I turned strange and flustered, my heart began to beat fast, and things seemed to swim; but it went off directly, being owing, perhaps, to the cut on my head and the exposure to a hot sun. And then they would take no refusal, but walked me up to the first luff, and told him what they wanted, when he gave me leave in a moment, and that, too, at a time when it was almost as bad as mutiny to ask such a thing. But he was pleasant as could be, and what was more, slipped his hand in his pocket to give me some money, for pay-day had not come round yet.

The dark gentleman, though, saw what he was about, and stopped him; and then these two took me ashore, and made me dine with them at the first hotel in the place, and seemed never tired of talking about what they called my gallant behaviour to the Misses Dean. They meant it right enough, and perhaps it's ungrateful of me; but they could not tell that they were stabbing me over and over again with every word a'most they said, till I could hardly bear it, and had to work hard to keep from seeming rude.

But it was time for them to go at last; and Captain Dean said I was to be sure and go and see him; while the other gentleman, who said his name was Morley, held my hand in his for some time, and said his message for me from his dear wife was, that she sent her true and sisterly love to her dear preserver, and begged that he would come and see her in London.

Then he gave me the address, and I knew it directly as the one Miss Mary had given me; while this time it was upon two little cards, and over one was written, "Mr. Harris Morley," and over the other, "Mrs. Harris Morley." And then they were gone, and I was standing alone upon the platform at the railway-station, having just seen them into the carriage; while from the time that Mr. Morley gave me those cards till we stood on the platform, all seemed heavy and confused.

But I had a packet in my hand which they had given me as they shook hands and said "Good-bye," and there was a letter with it, which I went and managed to read under one of the station lamps; and the letter was written by Mr. Morley, telling me that there was fifty pounds for me in one of the banks whenever I liked to draw it, while I was to feel that I never need want for a friend in any way as long as he, his wife, or Miss Maude Dean lived.

I walked into the second-class waiting-room then, thinking of the bygone, and looking at the packet I held in my hand. I did not want to open it then, for I should have liked to have done it when I was shut up somewhere alone, and I did not see when that would be—certainly not aboard ship, and people shove sailors anywhere ashore. So I took and opened that packet, and there was a handsome silver watch and chain in it, with a round gold locket, and inside it two little tiny locks of hair plaited together—the one being bright yellow, and the other black as jet. But there was another letter too, and a five-pound note inside it; and the letter was written and signed by Miss Mary—I can't seem

to call her by her other name—but there was a great deal in it as coming from her sister.

It was a letter as I did not feel it any disgrace to drop a few tears on, and it was like that kiss—such a one as a dear sister would send to a brother. It told me that she was married to the gentleman chosen by her dear father, and that she was very happy. It said, too, that I was to go and see them, and make their house my home whenever I liked. Then, too, she talked a deal about the sad past, and of how her poor sister had been ailing since the voyage from Australia. She, too, spoke of my gallant behaviour, when it was but my duty I had done, and she ended by saying that she would ever pray for my welfare, and begged that I would wear the watch for their sakes, while I was not to value it the less because it was not of gold, for her husband thought that a silver one would be a more suitable and useful gift.

It was ungrateful, I know, when it seemed that I might have money at any time for the asking while now I had five-and-fifty pounds of my own from them; but that part seemed to hurt me somehow, for it was like saying that I was only a common man, and only able to carry a silver watch. And this was quite right, you know; but for all that it seemed to rankle, though I knew all the time that the letter was tenderly and lovingly meant.

But that all went off again, and I went back on board. And the money is in the bank, while the letter and the watch are in my chest; and so sure as I take them out now and look at them, I get in that wild, dreamy way again; and at times, in the long watches, far away at sea, there's a bright face with golden hair floating round it, which always seems to be smiling on me; and it's ever there—in calm or in storm. And now sometimes when I lean over the bulwarks, looking far away, and going over and over again the story of that voyage, I get thinking that if I had been something better than a common sailor, what I felt might have been Love.

CHAPTER XXIII.—FROM ANOTHER LOG.

THE sloop of war *Saladin* gives in her log rather a strange incident of her cruise in the Pacific. The discovery took place some few years after the time alluded to in this story, though never considered sufficiently important to be brought before the public eye.

The weather had been exceedingly foul for some weeks; and at last, beaten far out of her course by adverse winds, the *Saladin* was sailing slowly along, making very little way in spite of the cloud of canvas spread to the breeze, when the look-out man announced smoke on the larboard bow.

Glasses were brought into requisition, and one or two declared the smoke to be merely a cloud; but as the day wore on the cloud seemed to alter but little in its appearance, and it was at last settled to be the light, flocculent pile of smoke and steam rising slowly from, and hanging over, a volcano.

Then the charts were examined, and the bearings taken, but no enlightenment resulted; so it was decided to run down, so as to possibly make a discovery for the extension of our geographical knowledge.

The next morning the sloop was close in to what appeared to be a volcanic island; while from one or two craters dense smoke was slowly ascending, though appearances denoted that there had been a very terrible eruption within the past few years.

A boat was soon out, laden with officers eager to explore the unknown island; but they had to coast along for some distance before they could find a place where it was safe to land, on account of the huge rollers which broke heavily upon the lava-formed shore, even though the sea elsewhere was almost calm. For the most part the island was one scene of desolation; for though in places there were green patches of vegetation, and the tall palm-like growths waved their graceful fronds on high, yet the greater part of the island seemed to have been devastated by the huge streams of lava which had rolled down the slopes of the conical interior hills, and then every here and there plunged at once as fiery torrents over the precipitous sides of the rocks, to quench themselves in the sea. Imagination could well run rampant there as it pictured the fearful eruption that must have taken place, as shown by the piles of scoriæ and masses of rent lava. Wherever there was an open space of shore the waves rolled over, in their ceaseless grinding motion, heap after heap of volcanic cinder. At one spot the boat passed there must have been an ebullition that it was almost fearful to contemplate. Vast must have been the clouds of steam, and terrible the hissing, as a huge stream of lava from far above took a leap of a hundred feet down into the deep waters that washed the base of the precipice. A little further, and they came to where a grove of trees had stood until the lava rushed through, turning the trunks into blackened charcoal; while everywhere lay the traces of the fearful hail of pumice-stone and ash that had fallen.

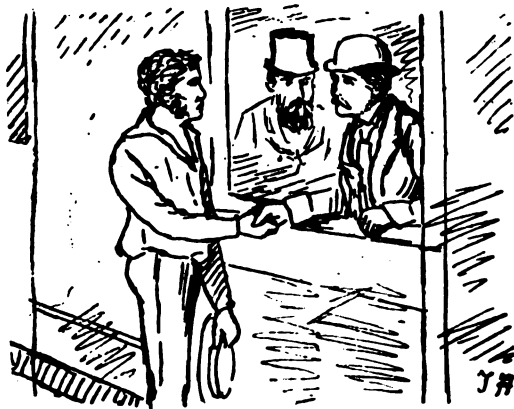
After rowing for some time, the boat reached a beautifully-formed little bay, along one side of which projected a spit of rocky land, ending in a sandy beach, where the party disembarked and began to explore. Some shot; some botanised; some were geologically disposed, and examined the traces of the late eruption, pausing by many a hissing crack, whence rushed sulphurous vapours. One party came upon the fragments of a boat lying in a little cove, stove almost to pieces; while further on, a few ship's timbers lay wedged in between the walls of a huge rift. They were the remains of what was once evidently a goodly ship; but the eruption had reached even here, and the keel and ribs remaining were blackened and charred.

This led to further explorations and discoveries inland, when, after penetrating by means of the chasms between the rent rocks, the party entered a desolate-looking valley, refreshed here and there, though, by the newly-springing verdure; and now, by the rocky face of a hill, they came upon a few traces of portions of the wrecked ship, evidently brought inland by the survivors—a barrel or two, iron work, and chain cable; but everything was nearly buried in the soft ashes, which gave way beneath their feet, and made walking almost painful.

There seemed, however, to be no traces of human beings further than their works; and at last, tired

out with a long ramble, the party assembled beneath the high scarped face of a huge rock, when one of the midshipmen fired at a bird, which fell wounded upon a ledge far above where they stood.

Heaped up against the rock in one part the vol-



canic cinders formed a sloping hill, and dashing eagerly up, with his feet sinking in deeply at every step, the midshipman continued climbing, and sending down little avalanches of dust and cinder as he progressed; but to the amazement of those beneath, before he was many feet up he suddenly disappeared, gliding inwards, while those who ran to his assistance were driven back by the cloud of dust that came slowly rolling down.

For a few minutes men looked aghast at one another, mistaking the dust for smoke, and imagining that the poor fellow had fallen through into some hideous volcanic rift, while imagination was ready with a scene of his writhings in the molten lava beneath.

The clearing away of the dust, though, displayed the mouth of a cave-like opening in the side of the rock; and before any assistance could be rendered, the midshipman appeared, covered with ashes, and pale and trembling, to roll rather than run down the cindery slope.

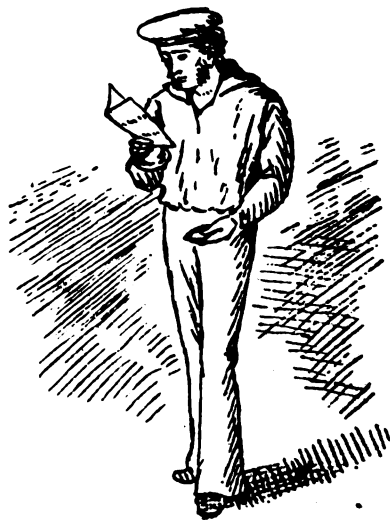
The cloud soon subsided, and after a few words from the young man, first one and then another slowly climbed the crumbling heap, and made his way into the exposed cave, which proved to be a regular storehouse, where the most useful portions of the lading of a ship had been brought together for the comfort and convenience of those who made it their home. There was a long table formed of planks laid upon casks; rough shelves fixed upon pegs driven into the rocky walls; arms hung from or leaning against the sides; while a roughly-prepared spot at the end of the cave, some twenty feet from the entrance, seemed to have been the sleeping-place of the cave-dwellers—those who first took the attention of the explorers, and made even stout men blanch and shudder involuntarily. For there, in various positions, were the remains of several men—some sitting at the table; one with his head upon it, as if asleep; two lying upon the rude bunk

that had served for bed; while another, seated upon a cask, rested his elbows upon the plank table, and grasped a drinking vessel.

"Phantoms of grisly bone"—strange weird figures, dried to skeletons, and, like everything else in the cave, covered with a fine impalpable dust. It was a terrible sight; but there seemed to be no trace of either fear or pain in any of the positions. It was as if their fate had overtaken them in a moment, steeping their senses in sleep—a sleep which made way at last for its twin brother death; for the deadly volcanic fumes which had evidently penetrated the place had been swift in their action.

The whole place must afterwards have been subjected to a slow heat, which had calcined many of the articles, some of which, though retaining their shape well enough, crumbled to dust when touched. Glass bottles were fused into uncouth forms, cutlasses were covered with scales, and guns fell from their stocks when handled. Men spoke in whispers as they gazed upon the strange sight, even asking themselves whether it was true, and not a freak of the imagination; while it was not until they were once more beneath the bright blue of heaven, and felt the soft sea breeze which floated away the white, flocculent smoke-cloud which slowly rose from the peak a thousand feet above their heads, that they breathed freely.

The next day the captain and another portion of the ship's company landed at the point; and when threading their way amongst the rough fragments of rock and lava, one of the men stumbled upon a skull wedged in between two rugged stones, where it had evidently been forced by the waves. Such a discovery soon brought the surgeon to the spot,



who seemed much taken with the massive proportions and peculiar configuration of the relic. He preserved it carefully, showing it ever after to his scientific friends as a remarkably developed specimen of a negro skull.

The closing up of the cave-mouth with kindred ashes was the concluding act of the last visit, and after collecting a few memorials of the strange scene, the party returned on board, and by night the soft, feathery clouds over the volcano were miles away; while the next ship that sailed that unfrequented course noted but a dangerous reef.

THE END.

The Ghost of a Flea.

BLAKE, the painter, an exhibition of whose works was held a short time ago, seems to have been an extraordinary being. Blake's visions, as he describes them to his friends, are excellently noted down by that clever writer and poet, Allan Cunningham:—

"I see," said I, "a naked figure with a strong body and a short neck—with burning eyes which long for moisture, and a face worthy of a murderer—holding a bloody cup in its clawed hands, out of which it seems eager to drink. I never saw any shape so strange, nor did I ever see any colouring so curiously splendid—a kind of glistening green and dusky gold, beautifully varnished. But what in the world is it?"

"It is a ghost, sir; the ghost of a flea—a spiritualization of the thing!"

"He saw this in a vision, then?" I said.

"I'll tell you all about it, sir. I called on him one evening, and found Blake more than usually excited. He told me he had seen a wonderful thing—the ghost of a flea!"

"And did you make a drawing of him?" I inquired.

"No, indeed," said he. "I wish I had; but I shall if he appears again!"

"He looked earnestly into a corner of the room, and then said—

"Here he is! Reach me my things. I shall keep my eye on him. There he comes! His eager tongue whisking out of his mouth, a cup in his hand to hold blood, and covered with a scaly skin of gold and green!"

"As he described him, so he drew him."

Sunstroke.

PROBABLY the affection designated sunstroke (the *Lancet* remarks) is not the malady to which the term *coup de soleil* can be properly applied. The condition brought about is an exaggerated form of the disturbance occasioned by entering too suddenly the "hot" room of a Turkish bath. The skin does not immediately perform its function as an evaporating and, therefore, cooling surface, and an acute febrile state of the organism is established, with a disturbed balance of circulation, and more or less cerebral irritation as a prominent feature of the complaint.

Death may suddenly occur at the outset of the complaint, as it has happened in a Turkish bath, where the subject labours under some predisposition to apoplexy, or has a weak or diseased heart.

It should suffice to point out the danger, and to explain, by way of warning, that although the degree of heat registered by the thermometer, or the power of the sun's rays, do not seem to suggest especial caution, all sudden changes from a low to a high temperature are attended with danger to weak organisms. The avoidance of undue exercise—for example, persistent trotting or cantering up and down the Row—is an obvious precaution on days marked by a relatively, if not absolutely, high temperature.

We direct attention to this matter because it is obvious the peculiar peril of overheating the body by exertion on the first burst of fine weather is not generally realised. It is forgotten that the increased temperature must be measured by the elevation which has recently taken place, not the number of degrees of heat at present recorded. The registered temperature may be more or less than that which occurred a year ago; but its immediate effects on the organism will be determined by the conditions which have preceded it and the violence of the change.

Carving a Turkey.

THERE is nothing a young unmarried man likes better than to go to dinner at the house of a friend and to be asked to carve the turkey.

He never carved a turkey in his life, and with an old maid on one side of him, watching him closely, and on the other side a fair girl for whom he has a tenderness, he feels embarrassed when he begins.

First he pushes the knife down toward one of the thigh-joints. He can't find the joint, and he plunges the knife around in search of it, until he makes mince-meat out of the whole quarter of the fowl.

Then he sharpens his knife, and tackles it again. At last, while making a terrific dig, he hits the joint suddenly, and the leg flies into the maiden lady's lap, while her dress front is covered with a shower of stuffing. Then he goes for the other leg, and when the young lady tells him he looks warm, the weather seems to him suddenly to become 400 degrees warmer.

This leg he finally pulls loose with his fingers. He lays it on the edge of the plate, and while he is hacking at the wing he gradually pushes the leg over on the clean table-cloth; and when he picks it up it slips from his hand into the gravy dish, and splashes the gravy around for six square yards.

Just as he has made up his mind that the turkey has no joints to his wings, the host asks him if he thinks the Indians can really be civilized?

The girl next to him laughs, and he says he will explain his views on the subject after dinner.

Then he sops his brow with his handkerchief, and presses the turkey so hard with the fork that it slides off the dish and upsets a goblet of water on the girl next to him.

Nearly frantic, he gouges away again at the wings, gets them off in a mutilated condition, and digs into the breast. Before he can cut any off, the host asks him why he don't serve out the turkey.

Bewildered, he puts both legs on a plate and hands them to the maiden lady, and then helps the young girl to a plateful of stuffing, and while taking her plate in return knocks over the gravy-dish.

Then he sits down with the calmness of despair, and fans himself with a napkin, while the servant girl clears up, and takes the turkey to the other end of the table.

He doesn't discuss the Indian question that day. He goes home right after dinner, and spends the night trying to decide whether to commit suicide or to take lessons in carving.

The Way the Wires Work.

IN the building in which the writer was employed some time since was a negro porter, named Burnet. Among his duties was that of carrying telegraphic messages to the offices of the companies for transmission. He has cudgelled his brains as to the method thereof, and the result was indicated one day when there happened to be passing a waggon loaded with the large poles used by the telegraph companies in supporting their wires.

Upon my alluding to their extraordinary size, Burnet, who was standing near, said—

"I specs dem telegraph poles has to be pooty large, don't dey, Mr. H—?"

"What makes you think that?" I asked.

"Well, I s'pose jist for de standing dey don't need to be so big, but when dey puts on de pressu' dey has to be pooty strong."

"What do you mean by putting on the pressure?"

"Why," said he, "when dey sends the messages over, don't dey have to put on de pressu'?"

That is a fair theory; but President Orton once gave us another explanation, made by a "man and a brother," thus:—

"Now you see, Sam, 'spose da was a dog, and dat dog's head was in Hoboken and his tail in Brooklyn."

"Go 'way, da ain't no such dog."

"Well, s'pose da was."

"Well, s'pose da was."

"Well, den, de telegram is jes like dat dog. If I pinch dat dog's tail in Brooklyn, what he do?"

"Dunno."

"Why, if I pinch dat dog's tail in Brooklyn, he go bark in Hoboken. Dat's de science of it."

"Golly! golly!"

Burnt Alive.

IT is rather startling to find, from a translation of the *Amsita Bazar Patrika* of the 10th of last March, that at the inhumation of the remains of the late Jung Bahadoor, his senior wife, and the two next in the order of seniority, were burnt with his corpse, in spite of all that his brother could do to dissuade them.

The funeral pyre, as is usual, was made so as to contain the body of the deceased as in a grotto, but in this case it was made rather larger for the accommodation of the three Ranees. It was composed of sandal wood, covered with camphor and other inflammable gums, which ignite at a touch,

and while burning fiercely emit such dense clouds of smoke as make human life, or at least consciousness, impossible in a single minute.

The three intending victims seemed to have behaved with extraordinary firmness, considering that they could have drawn back from the terrible ordeal at the last moment. They performed their ablutions, said their prayers, gave orders to their brother-in-law as to the government of the district, released prisoners, distributed alms, and then entered the pyre calm and emotionless.

The senior Ranee took the head of the corpse in her lap and the two juniors the feet, Bahadoor's eldest son applied the fire, and in a couple of minutes, we are told, all was over, without sound or movement.

Of course, at the spot where this horrible rite took place the English Government has no more direct jurisdiction than it has in Paris. But it does seem strange that Jung Bahadoor, who was keenly alive to the force of English counsels and opinions, should have allowed such a horrible custom to exist in the wide district which he administered.

Every example of this kind tends to strengthen the bonds of this cruel superstition. It is to be hoped that now it has been in this case brought prominently into notice, the English Government will lose no time in pressing upon the young ruler of Nepaul the necessity of abolishing this shocking practice.

A SERIOUS explosion occurred many years ago at one of the pits near Newcastle. One of the miners was killed, and one of his comrades rushed off to the house of the dead man to convey the sad news. "Hae ye heerd o' the explosion?" he anxiously inquired on entering the house. "No, I've niver heerd ought about it," replied a male inmate. "Wey, thors' been an explosion, and yor Jim's blawn all to bits." "Gox, man, was he?" said the relative. Then, after a reflective pause, "Wey, he's getten maw clasp knife!"

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.

And Manchester and Liverpool.

THE SPIDER OF DUXTON.

BRING THE

Adventures of Three Belles, Three Beaux, and a Married Couple.



"HE TOOK THE TOOTH OUT 'LOVELY.'"—(Page 8.)

The Spider of Duxton.

BEING THE ADVENTURES OF THREE BELLES,
THREE BEAUX, AND A MARRIED COUPLE.

CHAPTER I.—“BRITONS NEVER SHALL BE SLAVES!”

“**TINTION!** Ivery gentleman will now bring his heels smartly together, brace his body up, dropping his arms to his sides—little fingers touching the seams of his throusis, and gently feel his files right and left. Now, you understand, at the word ‘Tintion’ all to spring smartly up. Now then—*’Tintion!’*”

There was a shuffling movement in a row of about five-and-twenty men, standing before a very starchy, smart, small-pox-peppered sergeant of the Coldstreams, who frowned upon them fiercely, as he stood with his cane thrust under his arms and across his back, trussing him like a skewer, as he snapped and barked forth his orders to his awkward squad.

“Has you were!” shouted the sergeant.

And the row of men, in all sizes and costumes, stood once more at what was supposed to be ease, but in a very stiff, constrained way. “Now, gentlemen, pray do try—see if ye can’t do it a little worse this time. All ye’ve got to do is to spring smartly up, heels together, fingers touching the seams of your throusis. Now, then, smartly—*’Tintion!’* That’s better, gentlemen. Now dress—eyes right. No, no, no, sor; don’t bob your head forrid like that; jist turn yer eye to the right, and range yerself with yer neebor. Number six, there—an inch forrider. No, no, not a fut—now, that’s too far back. There, that’ll do. Number four, there—gentlemen, do pay ‘tintion. What’s the good of me roaring meself hoarse if ye won’t listen! Number four, I say!”

“Now, then, number four,” was muttered.

And the men on either side nudged a pudgy little gentleman of about forty.

“Silence, there, in the rank!” cried the sergeant. “Nobody to spake but me. Now, then, there; is there a number four at all—at all? That short gentleman there—why don’t ye answer, sir?”

“Oh, am I number four?” said the pudgy gentleman.

“Why, what are ye, if ye’re not?” cried the sergeant. “Didn’t ye call out yere number when we told off by fours from the lift? Gentlemen, I’m ashamed of ye—ye don’t get on a bit. Now, thin, keep yer dress; and I say, sir, what are ye doing? If natur’s given ye a bigger bread-basket than other men, ye needn’t be so proud of it that ye’re showing it right in front of all the rank. Brace yerself up, sir! It’s yer chists I want to see to the front, gentlemen, and yer bodies well balanced on the pynts of yer feet. That’s better. Now, ye’re all in position, and mind and keep it. Ah! don’t move—ye’re all at ‘tintion.’”

The sergeant stiffly marched down the front of his squad, and up the back, administering a pat here and a poke there, squinting along the row of noses to get them in line, and then marching back to his former position, while his squad stood hot and panting yet from the number of times that they had been marched and doubled up and down the flags of the

great Hall of Westminster, lit up and lent by Government, during the recess, for the drilling of various London Volunteer corps. The hour was about half-past seven, and seven or eight more squads were being put through their paces by their various drill-sergeants, whose orders echoed in the roof as they halted, faced, and backed, and appeared to worry the men under their charge, in their efforts to turn them from sentient human beings into portions of that great piece of mechanism—a regiment of soldiers, be they volunteer or mercenary troops. Spectators there were but few; only here and there officers in volunteer undress uniform stood and smiled, and straddled about, watching the progress of their men in the hands of the regular practitioners, and generally themselves wearing an expression mingled of pride and shame in their new uniform. They mostly seemed troubled with an idea that everybody was staring at them, and the efforts to maintain an unconscious look were, on the whole, a dead failure, till they were released from their unpleasant position by the drill-sergeant placing them in a worse, and asking them to take command of a company, and issue orders that would come at the wrong time and place.

“Now, gentlemen,” said the sergeant of whom we treat, “I am going to try the first extinsion movement.”

“Tchisher-r-r-r!” from the left.

“For goodness’ sake, gentlemen, do be careful!” cried the sergeant, imploringly. “Here’s all my tyle thrown away. Do think of that, now—a file sneezing at ‘tintion!’”

“Well, hang it all, sergeant, it’s the dust—ertchishere!” went the pudgy gentleman dubbed number four.

“Dust, sir!” roared the sergeant. “What’s dust got to do with it? When a man’s at ‘tintion’ he’s no business to have any imotions, or feelings, or anything. Now, gentlemen, pray be careful. First extinsion motion. When I say—Confound it, sir, put that handkercher away!”

“Why, I must blow my nose,” growled the gentleman who had been found fault with respecting prominent parts of his person.

“No you musn’t, sor. Why, just suppose, now, that ye all had your rifles, and I gave the order, ‘Fix bayonets!’—how would ye do that with a yaller silk handkercher flourishing about? Now, thin, gentlemen, keep yer dress, and be ready; we’re going to practise the balance-step. Whin I say ‘front!’ every man will extend his right fut eighteen inches, as if he was going to march, and hold it there, but without touching the ground; body well balanced, and no swagging about. Thin, whin I say ‘rare!’ the fut is to be carried back behind the body. And, mind this, gentlemen, whin the fut is to the front, the toes are to be well down; when the fut is to the rare, the toes are to be well up. Now, thin, gentlemen—Front!”

In a most irregular way, five and twenty feet were thrust out, some to rest on the ground, some taking their owners with them, and some to be held correctly, while the recruits tried hard to balance themselves on one leg.

“Tintion!” cried the sergeant. “Rayley, gentle-

men, we must have more care. Now, thin, once more—and mind, sor, plase,” he said to the little stout gentleman, “you were quite out of your dressing.”

“All right, sergeant,” said the little man cheerily; and then to his neighbour, in a whisper, “Look out, Potter.”

“Tintion, there—now, thin,” without further warning, cried the sergeant, “front!”

Every foot was extended; and, though the line was very wobbly, the men contrived to keep on one leg.

“Very good, gentlemen,” cried the sergeant. “Now, thin, whin I say ‘rare,’ the right foot to be carried back, and held there. Rare! Very good. Keep it there. Now, thin, again. Keep your balance, gentlemen. Front! Rare! Front! Rare! Front!—Ah!”

The sergeant might well shriek forth “Ah!” For, just as every man was balanced on one leg, the stout little gentleman gave a lurch to the right, and another to the left, and the whole squad toppled sidewise in inextricable confusion—the impulse given by one push being continued all along the line, men going down after the fashion of a row of the tin soldiers of childhood, from some unlucky touch just after they had been ranged.

“Pick yerselves up, gentlemen; pick yerselves up. It was a done thing, I can see; but, let me tell ye, such a game as that in the regular troops, would have been extry drill in heavy marching order.”

The stout little gentleman was evidently much affected by the prospect, for he stood wiping the tears from his eyes, and occasionally administering a dig in his tall, stout neighbour’s side—elbow thrusts which brought forth expostulatory growls, and at length a loud remonstrance.

“Now, thin, gentlemen,” cried the sergeant, viciously, as he formed his squad once more into line; and then out of revenge he marched them up and down the hall—right turn, left turn, front turn, forward, right turn, forward, double, right wheel, left wheel, right about wheel—till the dust was beaten up, and men perspired and panted. First the protuberant gentleman, then his friend the short, stout gentleman, and then a couple more, fell out, panting and wiping the perspiration from their brows, when the sergeant considerably halted, and dismissed the residue, and an adjournment took place.

“Tell you what it is, Skewy,” said the tall, stout gentleman, as he and his friend sought a neighbouring bar, where they recruited themselves with stout and oysters, “I’ve had nearly enough of this.”

“Pooh! nonsense!—do us no end of good,” said the plump, rosy little man, addressed as Skewy. “The very thing we wanted. March out to-morrow in uniform—band—and British admiring maidens, and that sort of thing. You must keep it up, Potter.”

“I’ve had too much of this heavy drill lately. I want a change,” said the gentleman addressed as Potter.

“Change! Yes, you shall have change enough; only don’t talk of dropping it. Now you mention it, though, I think a change would do us both good. But come, I say, let’s get back now!”

“I shall have another dozen of oysters first, and then I shall top off with a glass of whisky and water before I think of moving,” said Mr. Potter, heavily.

“No, no, let’s get back. I’ll call a hansom, and we’ll have them at home,” said the other, testily.

“I shall have them here,” said Mr. Potter.

“Then I shall go without you,” said the other.

“Mr. Askew,” said Potter, loftily, “you may go to Jericho if you like! Waiter, open me another dozen of oysters.”

Mr. Askew, familiarly termed by his friend “Skewy,” looked at his brother volunteer angrily for a moment, and then walked out into the street, but only to return at the end of a few seconds.

“I say, Potter,” he said, coaxingly, “come along, there’s that piece on at the Adelphi, and we could just manage it now, if we started.”

Mr. Potter refused to hearken, and upon a couple more appeals being made, he turned his back upon his friend, who testily left the refreshment bar, the swinging door banging heavily behind him.

CHAPTER II.—INTRODUCES JONES AND CO.

LIEUTENANT REGINALD JONES of the 1st Duxshire Light Horse sat in his drawing-room at Richmond Villa, Duxton, reading the *Times*. The troop had been out that afternoon, and Mr. Jones had returned somewhat jaded, so that he had contented himself with merely changing his shell jacket for a shooting coat, and his graceful lower limbs were still encased in blue trousers with a broad silver stripe, while his spurs were buried in the thick woolly hearth-rug. Mrs. Jones was there also, in a low bergère chair, busily engaged with the large fashion sheet of *The Young Ladies’ Journal*, which employment she, however, soon changed with a sigh for the magazine itself, and began to devour “Spenser’s Wife.”

Now it must not be supposed that Mrs. Jones was a lady of ghost-like or anthropophagistic habit, for it was only a story by the above title, and it was being mentally digested, when Mr. Jones spoke without lifting his eyes from the paper—

“My darling!”

“Yes, dearest!” was the reply.

“A few more coals upon the fire, my own.”

“Yes, love,” said Mrs. Jones, in tremulous tones, mingled of cold, affection, and interest.

Mr. Reginald Jones read on as hard as he could, being deeply interested in the reported proceedings of the volunteers, for he only had the *Times* for one hour every evening, and as it was had afterwards by an irascible half-pay captain, who was given to being “waxy”—so the boy said—if it was late, the said boy was very punctual in fetching it away.

Mrs. Jones, too, read on, forgetful of the fire in her interest, and the consequence was that the fire resented the neglect, so that the lady and gentleman shivered slightly from time to time.

Mr. Jones was not a handsome man, neither was he young, but he was comfortably off, “as the sayin’ is.” Neither was Mrs. Jones handsome, but there was a great deal of the Roman matron about her. She was more prominent than bony, not angular by any means, but prominent in every respect. Her

features were prominent, especially her nose and eyes—the latter, in fact, so much so that when some fifteen years before she had been the inmate of a finishing seminary she was popularly known as “Strangles.” She was prominent of voice also,



for it possessed that unmellow and musical twang that sometimes affects the voices of maiden ladies not attuned in early years by the softening hand of love.

Mr. Reginald Jones had for many years been the faithful friend and companion of Messrs. Potter and Askew, of whose status in society more anon; but it fell out that during a short visit to Duxton, and a stay at the County Arms in that town for the purpose of having a few runs with the North Down pack, he was thrown from his horse, or, as one of the whips said, “come off like a sack of chaff.” The accident necessitated the services of the principal practitioner in the place, Doctor Langton Smallbois—they did say his name was Smallbois when he was young, but it was spelled Smallbois on the brass plate on his door, so it must have been right. The attendance resulted in an introduction to the doctor’s family of four unmarried daughters and his lady, “the amiable spouse of our noble-hearted physician,” as it once said in the *Duxton Dictum*, when that paper reported the company present at the last volunteer ball in the big room of the County Arms, though the ill-natured of the place had christened her the “Spider of Duxton.” At all events, Mr. Jones, pale, interesting, and forty, was introduced, and the result was such as usually befalls living beings who get caught in webs.

Mrs. Smallbois soon found that Mr. Jones had no legal practice, but that he had seven hundred a year clear of income tax; and that same night, in bed, she made use of the following strange words to her lord, who was very sleepy from having been called up two nights running—

“He’ll do, Lang.”

And before long it seemed that he did do, for Mrs. Smallbois threw web after web round the poor fellow, and did not let him go till he was engaged to her eldest daughter; and six months after he

became the husband of Seraphina, otherwise “Strangles,” otherwise, in the domestic circle, “Saph,” though, in spite of her size, not from any allusion to the giant of old.

In those honey-and-water days preceding the tying of the nuptial knot, when Jones’s friends had given him up for a renegade, the fair Seraphina exacted a great many promises, and among others that she should not be taken away from “dear mamma,” and that Mr. Jones was to give up all his naughty wild, wicked companions, the consequence being that J., so Mrs. Smallbois called him, under dear mamma’s orders, bought the half-finished villa two miles on the London Road, and dear mamma bullied the builder till he got it finished, when she helped her dear lambs to furnish.

The course of true love never did run smooth—everybody knows that; and Mrs. Smallbois’s second and third daughters were greatly disgusted that Mr. Jones had not proposed to one of them in preference, Arabella saying that he was a great booby; Grace, that he was little better than an idiot; while Mary, the fourth daughter—a Cinderella sort of young person whom nobody ever thought of noticing—went and kissed big Saph, and, with tears in her eyes, told her that she hoped she would be happy, a display of affection resulting in her being told not to be a little fool.

Had Mr. Jones been left to himself he would soon have furnished his badly-finished, raw villa, but mamma said, no; she could not stand by and see dear Jones’s money wasted: so she set about it herself, seeking bargains at Bonham’s and Oxenham’s, and every other sale room in London, bullying brokers, and showing the Israelitish vultures—who will not, if they can help it, allow any decent person to buy an article at a fair auction price—that she did not care for them a bit.

It was quite cheering to hear of the bargains she secured; and if she was forced by coalescion to pay generally a good deal more for goods than they were worth, Jones did not know the difference, so it did not matter.

Tottenham Court-road did the rest, and Mrs. Smallbois congratulated her dear boy at last upon her having saved him quite two hundred and fifty pounds, whilst his drawing-room suite—“suet” the furniture-dealer called it—was one of the sweetest things under a roof.

This digression for the description of persons, places, and things, was necessary; but the way being now clear, we proceed to where Mr. and Mrs. Jones, after some months of matrimony, sat on either side of their neglected fire.

Mr. Jones had twice, as he read on, hitched his chair a little closer to the grate—so also had Mrs. Jones—and at last, just when, caused either from cold, or horror, or what they read, those little hills seated upon the cuticle had arrived at their greatest point of surface—highest state of apex—and the occupants of Richmond Villa drawing-room were decidedly goose-skinny, Jane, parlour and house-maid, went to answer the gate bell, for the news-lad had come for the *Times*.

The night was stormy, and the wind set in straight at the front; and as the front door was opened,

puff! the wind came in with a rush, dashed down the passage, burst open the ill-fastened drawing-room door with a crash, striking the cheffonier behind; the camphine lamp went out in an instant; and brought back so suddenly to matters mundane, Mrs. Jones shrieked aloud, and then gave vent to numberless hysterical sobs.

Dashing down the broadsheet, Mr. Jones would have aided his lady, but the fire was extinct, and he was in total darkness, so that there was nothing for him to do but to grope his way to the bell upon Mrs. Jones's side of the mantelpiece, sweeping off as he did so a large ornamental vase, which shivered with a loud crash in the fender, adding to Mrs. Jones's alarm, during which time the wind howled and whistled with triumphant defiance, till, after a hard struggle, Jane managed to close the front door, leaving the boy in the passage.

"Here! a light—a light!" cried Jones, frantically, as he heard the front door close, and steps go pattering over the oilcloth. Then a door was opened somewhere in the back, and soon after the maid appeared, kitchen candlestick in hand, to stand staring with wonder; but the next moment she caught up the *Times*, hurried out into the passage, and started the boy, before she returned to stand staring once more.

"There—there! don't stand in that stupid, helpless way, girl!" cried Mr. Jones, as he tried to light the lamp. "Run and fetch the cook to come and assist your mistress."

"Plee', sir, did the wind blow the fire out too?" gasped the astonished maid.

"Oh, oh, oh!" sobbed Mrs. Jones, giving herself a crick in the neck, by letting her head hang over the chair back, until her lord eased her down upon the hearth-rug.

"There, don't stand staring like that, girl!" cried Mr. Jones. "Fetch the cook, I tell you. What is it, my own?" he whispered, as he tried to soothe his lady; for Mr. Jones was a firm believer in hysterics, especially in those of Mrs. Jones, specimens of which he had gazed upon once or twice before.

"Oh! oh! oh!" gurgled Mrs. Jones.

"Tell me, my sweet, what is it?" cried the kneeling Jones.

"It's sterricks, sir—that's what it is," said a rather husky voice. "It's sterricks, sir, and bad 'uns, too, a pore dear! Ah, sir, you shouldn't, you know. I knows what things is, and how things is, and I'm afraid you've been a worritin' of her. Never mind then, a pore dear; it'll soon be better."

The voice proceeded from the dame who presided over the back regions of Mr. Jones's villa, for the consideration of eighteen pounds a year, and found her own tea and sugar. She was a stoutish, elderly lady, with a florid countenance, and a temper. In short, the voice was that of Mrs. Scaldar, the cook, who now lent her aid to the shivering Jones.

"Jest as I thought, sir," she exclaimed, after some manipulation: "there's them blessed laces that tight as you can't get your finger in."

"Oh, cook! how can you?" exclaimed Jane.

"Well, so they are, Miss Demure. Now, ain't they, sir? You hold her pore head a bit, while I snips 'em up. There! then, now she can breathe

again. What a pity it is as the pore thing will worry herself so about her figger! Come, then; what is it, then?"

"Oh! oh! oh!" gasped Mrs. Jones, as if running up a scale.

"You see she's a getting her breath quite free now, sir," said Mrs. Scaldar. "She's a coming round. What's them, sir?"

"Salts," said Mr. Jones, in the humble way peculiar to gentlemen in such emergencies.

"And what's that ere in the jug?"

"Cold water," said Jane, who had already wetted her hand with sprinkling intentions.

"There, take 'em both away; the pore thing wants none o' your salt and water, I know. She wants her pore pale lips to be rubbed and mystened with jest a wee taste of sperrits."

Leaving her words to work for themselves, Mrs. Scaldar busied herself patting and chafing, heedless that her brown "front," with its black silk parting, had so slipped down over one side of her forehead, as to give her a weird, goblin, or rakish look—one that would suggest ideas respecting "lips being mystened with jest a wee taste of sperrits."

Mr. Jones took the hint, and fetched from the cellar the decanter which contained cognac, when Mrs. Scaldar "mystened" the lady's lips and temples, and afterwards tried to make her partake of a part of a wine-glassful, but without effect; when, not knowing what to do with it, and for fear of waste, Mrs. S. took advantage of Mr. Jones's back being turned, and tossed off the fiery spirit without winking.

"There, a pore thing," said Mrs. Scaldar—"she's getting over it nestely. Pray, don't be hard on her, sir; don't say nothing to the pore thing. It makes my heart—"



"But, my good woman," remonstrated Jones. "I never—"

"There—there, sir; don't say no more," said Mrs. Scaldar. "I've lived a many years, and I knows what things is."

And she wagged her head sagely and mournfully.

"Why, hang the woman!" cried Jones. "What does she mean?"

"Oh—oh—oh!" sobbed Mrs. Jones.

"There, now, sir; you see what you've been and done. I did beg of you not to," said Mrs. Scaldar, reproachfully. "You shouldn't, sir—indeed you shouldn't! Jest think what tender flowers women is. Now you've driven her back into a lapse. Now do take the advice of one as is old enough to be your mother. You aint wanted here; so do go, there's a good soul. She won't be no better till you goes and leaves her for a bit. We'll get her on the sofy, and make her cumf'table; and bime-by you may come back, and see how she's a getting on."

Mr. Jones did not much like being ordered out of his own room; so he scowled and hesitated, till, seeing Jane clasp her hands and Mrs. Scaldar mournfully raise her eyes towards the ceiling, he gave way, and went out into the passage. But recollecting directly after that he had left the brandy upon the table, and, fancying that it would be better on the dining-room sideboard, he returned.

But no sooner had Mr. Jones left the room, than, going to the back of her recumbent mistress, Dame Scaldar took decanter and glass in hand, gave Jane a significant wink, said something in a whisper about "a toothful," and began pouring out a quantity which indicated how large must be the capacity of Mrs. Scaldar's hollow tooth. Directly after, with a grin at the fainting Saph, the brimming glass was raised to lip, when the door opened, and Mr. Jones appeared.

Crash went decanter and glass upon the carpet, and a gurgling appeal for help issued from the vessel's throat, as its potent contents began to trickle upon the floor.

The appeal was too much for Mr. Jones, and also for the convicted cook. "Good—good—good!" went the wasting brandy; and knowing its goodness they rushed to the rescue, when in an instant there was a heavier crash, for two heads came violently into contact, rebounded, and, naturally looking sheepish, Mr. Jones found himself seated upon the carpet, while Mrs. Jones screamed louder than ever, in consequence of having to bear the weight of Mrs. Scaldar, who was lying across her with head resting upon the grate-bar, fortunately now nearly cold.

Jane shrieked in duet with Mrs. Jones, who also struggled to free herself from the mighty mass; but Mrs. Scaldar lay motionless as heavy, till by sheer force Jane dragged her off, when, by the new catastrophe quite freed from "sterricks," Mrs. Jones rose, and, in her turn, helped to minister to the necessities of the fallen cook, upon whose forehead a large bump was already rising, just where it was left exposed by the now missing front; while as to the appearance of Mrs. Scaldar's gray head—it was not surprising that even though confused, Mr. Jones should withdraw once more of his own accord, to calm himself with half an hour's walk and a cigar; at the end of which time he returned to find the fire re-lit, the tea-things upon the table, and Mrs. Jones pale and conscious, and apparently

at a loss which *rôle* to adopt—that of the injured or injurer, and waiting for the course of events to furnish her with the necessary teachings.

CHAPTER III.—OPENS UP TOM BARNARD.

"AH!" said Mr. Jones, upon entering the room after his walk, his head slightly aching, but his nerves calmed down by his cigar, for he still adhered to that pernicious practice, although its observance was banished in the villa. "Ah! that looks better."

"I think, love," said Mrs. Jones, reprovingly, "you might have said was I better?"

"Say it now," cried Jones, playfully, clasping his lady's waist. "My darling, are you better?"

"Oh pray, Mr. J.! My love, don't! Indeed I cannot! That odious tobacco!"

Mr. Jones refrained from imprinting a chaste salute, subsiding instantly into the matter-of-fact, and taking up the bright poker to stir the fire.

"Mister Jones, that fire has only just been lit."

Jones put down the poker, and hummed a melancholy air, as he warmed the tails of his coat, and wondered what two old friends of his were doing, while Mrs. Jones proceeded to brew the tea. But the thoughts of old friends and bachelor ways made the master of the house forget himself—those old habits do fit so tightly—for taking up the bright, ornamental, flimsy Tottenham Court-road shovel, he sharply inserted it between the bottom bars, for one of those invigorating rakes which make a fire brighten up better than any poking, especially if the withdrawn contents be afterwards deposited upon the top.

"Mis—ter Jones!" shrieked the lady, in a voice which reached the kitchen, and made Mrs. Scaldar shrug her shoulders, screw up her countenance, and softly express her opinion to Jane that they were "at it again."

"I beg pardon, my dear," said Mr. Jones, hastily replacing the shovel.

"Pray sit down," said the lady; "we are so late."

"Thanky, my love, I'd rather stand—have my cup on the mantelpiece."

Mrs. Jones sighed, but whether at her husband's obstinacy, or at the recollection of the broken vase, did not appear.

"New man come," said Mr. Jones, by way of changing the current.

"New man?" said Mrs. Jones.

"Yes, new doctor: taken old Biggle's house; got his plate on the door already. Mr. T. Barnard, surgeon."

"What a shame!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones. "Poor papa will be in a way. So cruel, too, to come and set up in opposition to the old practitioner."

"But they will do it, these young beginners," said Mr. Jones, soothingly.

"Well, I'm quite sure of one thing—he'll be safe to starve, that's one comfort," said Mrs. Jones.

The first cup of tea was drunk in silence, Mrs. Jones taking hers in by gulps, as if she were trying to, and could not, swallow the new doctor; but suddenly a change came over her, as if something had just crossed her mind.

"I'm sure that cup of tea of yours is getting cold,

dearest," she said, tenderly. "Let me give you another."

"She's going to ask for money—safe," thought Jones, as he elevated his eyebrows and passed his cup. "Heigho! I wonder how Potter and Askew get on."

"Mamma and the girls were down here yesterday, love," said Mrs. Jones, as she playfully rested one white finger upon those of her lord, as he took his refilled cup. "They did not stay long, but mamma says it is quite a change for her, she goes out so little."

"Good job, too!" muttered Mr. Jones.

"She vows, though, that she will come and stay some day. I pressed her to stay then, but she would not. I did ask the girls, though, and they are coming to-morrow, for I knew how glad you would be to have them; and it's so odd I never thought to name it before. It was tiresome that you were out, wasn't it?"

Mr. Jones thought it was tiresome, and appeared relieved to think that there was no money in question.

"You see, dearest, it's so dull for you of an evening, and it will make it so pleasant and cheerful."

Mr. Jones began to think of other pleasant days that he had passed, and stood stirring his tea and recalling his friends, and the many times when they had stirred something far more potent than tea.

"Bella can have the blue-room," continued Mrs. Jones; "and Grace can have the pink-chamber. You won't mind, dear, will you?"

Mr. Jones sighed, for he was thinking of other chambers in town.

"What is it, dear?" said Mrs. Jones, with a great show of interest. "I'm afraid all that worry has upset you."

Mr. Jones muttered some excuse, and Mrs. Jones went on pleasantly prattling about the arrangements she had made till her lord put down his cup, when the tea-things were hurriedly sent away, and a little tea-kettle, singing hot, was placed by Jane upon the hob.

"What's that for?" said Mr. Jones.

"Why, my poor boy has been so put out to-night, that I thought a little brandy-and-water—"

"Is no brandy," said Jones, whose breath was quite taken away by these tender attentions.

"Well, then, whisky, dear," said Mrs. Jones; who with her own fair hands busily mixed the hot beverage and placed it beside him; frisked with a lightness that could not have been expected into the hall, returned directly with the cigar-case she had taken from an overcoat pocket, opened it, and presented Jones herself with one of the little brown rolls of leaf.

"Eh! What! Smoke? The curtains?" said Jones.

"I won't mind to-night, darling, and I know that it will do you good," whispered Mrs. Jones, and then she held a lighted splint for him to ignite his cigar, kissed him in one eye through the salute being badly aimed, and then frisked back to her chair before detaining grasp could stay her sylph-like form, all of which was very sweet and thoroughly matrimonial, but it would look like the jam that is sometimes placed round powders to hide the nauseous

dose, and as Mr. Jones thought of the past Mr. Jones sighed.

Now had Mr. Jones been a little less introspective he would have known that Mr. Tom Barnard, the doctor, had been in Duxton now for quite a month, and had not Mrs. Smallbois and the Misses Smallbois had ideas of their own, Mrs. Jones would have been enlightened regarding the fact that the doctor—of course, meaning Doctor Smallbois—was in no very amiable mood respecting the coming of this interloper.

Duxton was a remarkably healthy town, which accounts for the fact that one day a smart, keen-looking young fellow made his appearance, and took the house in the High-street that had so long afforded amusement to the boys and girls on their way to and from school, in dragging at the handle attached to a broken wire, and which made no bell ring. It has never been satisfactorily explained why it is that young men fresh from walking the hospitals pick out the most unlikely places in the world for settling down, and what they call "making a practice." Some of them make a practice soon after of leaving the place they have honoured very much in debt; and in spite of no inconsiderable share of wit, it very soon began to impress itself strongly upon Mr. Tom Barnard that his choice had been none of the wisest.

All the knowing ones in Duxton—and they were not a few, for there was not a man to be found without a very high estimation of himself—all the knowing ones shook their sapient heads, and said that Mr. T. Barnard, surgeon, could not live. But though Mr. T. B. was quite willing for all Duxton to fall ill, he did mean to live himself. And besides, as there were two doctors already, he took to heart the lessons learned from *Æsop's Fables*, and thought that while the lion and tiger were fighting for the spoil he might possibly play the part of fox and get a share for himself.

Upon arriving he had called upon both practitioners, and it had struck him how satisfactory it would be if he were to marry one of the Misses Smallbois, and enter into partnership with the doctor; but that gentleman could not see it in that light, and resented all Mr. Tom Barnard's advances. All the same though, the young surgeon determined upon his part, and settled down to wait, spending his time in taking walks, shooting cats in his garden with an air gun, skinning them for a rug, and studying anatomy afterwards by dissection. Then, too, he made the acquaintance of the curate, with whom he played chess.

As to professional duties, he was not overburdened, though he announced advice gratis; but the day before he had had a patient from Richmond Villa in the shape of Jane, who went to him to have a tooth extracted at the cost of a shilling, partly because her mistress had told her to go to papa's surgery, where it would be done for nothing.

Ignorant people never value medical advice that costs nothing, hence they may reasonably be expected to view with abhorrence and dread cheap tooth extraction, so Jane went to the new doctor for relief.

She was a young lady who spent a considerable

portion of her life with her jaw tied up in consequence of a natural tendency towards tooth and face ache, mumps, boils, and other unpleasanties of a similar nature.

Mr. Tom Barnard was very gracious to Jane, and



took the tooth out "lovely," paying such attention, and applying lint, and lastly supplying brandy to drive away cold. Then he praised the Misses Smallbois and Mrs. Jones, hoped Jane was comfortable, and that at any time she would come to him if she had the slightest ailment, which, of course, the fair Jane promised to do, while, when she tendered the shilling it was refused, and that night Mrs. Scaldar heard the new doctor's praises sounded for a good hour, and wondered whether he could do her "sinking" any good if she were to pay him a visit.

"Perhaps he could—with mixture," said Jane, with a meaning look.

"Yes, mixtur' might do it," said Mrs. Scaldar, and there the matter dropped.

Having plenty of time on his hands, Mr. Tom Barnard had made plans, and thought that it might be advisable if he joined the Duxton Rifles; so he did, and was already becoming a good marksman and a popular member. He sat in a pew which looked directly into the doctor's; and more than once—of course, by accident—he encountered the Misses Smallbois during their walks, so as to raise his hat, and inform them of the state of the weather—things which made people wink, and nod, and form their own ideas upon things in general.

Altogether, although no grist came to the mill, Tom Barnard congratulated himself upon the fact that he was getting the mill in good order, ready for grinding the grist when it did come. Everything looked satisfactory, he told himself—he should have the pick of the Misses Smallbois; and he had already begun to dream about Mary's pleasant, comely little face, when he suddenly awoke to the fact that he had been counting, if not his chickens before they were hatched, at all events, that chicken before it was his own, and wondered whether, after all, his pains had not been for nothing.

CHAPTER IV.—SINGLE DESTITUTION.

"TER-RUM-TUM—tum-tum—rub-a-dub-a-dub—tidy-umty—tidy-iddy—bang!" echoed again and again from the walls of the sooty old red brick houses in Equity Lane, the last notes of the "British Grenadiers," as the far-famed Boys of Court, or Somebody's Own Volunteers filed through the archway, across the yard, and into the square.

"Hor—r—r—lt! Left wheel into line. Ease off to the left there. Gentlemen—gentlemen, pray do attend! Just look there, now—two squeezed out of place."

"Confound you, sir, mind what you're doing. I'm muddy enough without—"

"Silence there in the ranks. Mr. Potter, will you be silent? Silence there!"

"Well, what the dev—"

"Silence there, I say, Mr. Pot—"

"Fours about!" cried a voice.

And there was a shambling facing about, some men turning at once, some apparently undecided upon hearing an unexpected order, the consequence being that in one company there was a considerable amount of confusion.

"Face!" shrieked the captain of the company.

"Who gave that order? I never spoke."

There was another amount of shuffling, just as the major cantered up.

"Good heavens! Captain Wellum, are you going to be all night dressing your company?"

"Not my fault!" cried the captain, furiously.

"Mr. Potter, are you going to take your place or are you not? Just say."

"Well, there ain't room, is there?" grumbled Mr. Potter, who was again crowded out.



"What an awkward bit of clay you are, Potter," exclaimed his rear file.

"Some one else talking," roared the captain.

"Silence in the ranks! Mr. Askew, be silent, sir. Right dress, gentlemen. Altogether now—right face. Dis—miss!"

The day's march out was at an end, and tired and dirty, the grey-clad defenders of the nation mingled in a confused crowd, as they sought their chambers in the various gloomy houses around. For our part, we follow two of the privates, whose



names have been mentioned, to a doorpost, bearing a long list of cognomens, among which appeared—
“Second floor: Mr. Potter—Mr. Askew.”

If you liked to climb up the wooden staircase to the above-named second floor, you stood at length upon a dreary, cold-looking landing, with parchment-hued doors, bearing the same legend in black letters, but of a size larger than those gracing the doorposts below. You could then turn round and gaze out of the landing window upon a glorious prospect of brickwork, leads, cisterns, chimneys, and lines, or rigging, stretched from available hooks, and bearing what were, in the pleasant faith of the inhabitants of the region between the lane and the square, believed to be clean clothes. You might catch a glimpse of a pale face with touzley hair at some window, or a lean and hungry cat creeping along a ridge; but you would have time for no more, since the two gentlemen just set free from the chains of discipline were now nearly at the top.

They were both stout, but Mr. Potter carried his stoutness off in his height of six feet, while Mr. Askew rather added to his plumpness through having adhered since he was twenty years of age to five feet two.

Similarity of position, habit, and the fact of their being neighbours, undoubtedly formed the cement which united these gentlemen, now verging upon the middle-time of life. They had been through a course of study, and also received calls to the bar. They lived, as we see, in chambers, in the approved fashion of barristers who had responded to the call; but as to briefs, had any one presented one of these documents, accompanied by a fee, it would most likely have been considered a mistake, and the clerk told to take it back. Certain arrangements made by ancestors had left both gentlemen in what are

termed comfortable circumstances. They liked to be looked upon as legal gentlemen, residing in chambers, for it gave a tone to their position; friends consulted and took their opinions, and, fortunately, so far, to the best of their knowledge, nothing very serious had happened through the said friends acting up to the said advice; while, for the further benefit of those who consulted them, two wigs and two gowns could be seen through the ajar door of a large closet, covered with the venerable legal dust peculiar to the district.

As a matter of course, these gentlemen possessed certain tastes—their joining the volunteer movement being for exercise, and to give tone to his system, so said Mr. Potter; to keep down the fat, said Mr. Askew. But Mr. Potter had a great love for the science of geology, and, being the more business-like man, Mr. Askew was often compelled to assist in settling a dispute concerning the amount of luggage his friend was allowed to take—luggage made weighty with fossils—over which many a skirmish took place with guard, porter, and cabman. To oblige his friend, Mr. Askew would often accompany him upon one of his geological expeditions, to return heavily laden and complaining; but he often had his revenge, by compelling Potter, short-sighted and impatient, to stand for hours upon some river bank fishing, and looking through his spectacles for bites and bobs of the float he could not see, during which time piscatorial Askew was landing many a satisfactory scaly prize.

Mr. Askew was not short-sighted, but he was troubled with a strange obliquity of vision, and being a plump, rosy little man, his friends were always in doubt whether the rolling of the affected orb was intentional or no. He fished, so he said, to kill time; though the greatest harm he would have done the swift old gentleman would have been to pull his



wings for quill-floats, and use his sand for ground-bait.

“I’m about tired of this drill and marching,” growled Mr. Potter, as he reached the landing. “There’s always some row, too, now; and the way

those puppies of officers speak to a gentleman is something abominable. What fool was that gave the wrong order, I wonder?"

"Oh! never mind now," said Mr. Askew.

And, opening the door, he led the way into their common sitting-room—no receptacle for mouldy law books and tin boxes; but all snug and cheery. Dancing firelight pleasantly reflected from plate and glass, which, in their turn, cast their shadows on the snowy cloth.

Indications of the owners being men of taste were in plenty; and, at the risk of being tedious, we must mention a few, since the list will also tend to show the lives led by these two rather important characters in our story. It was a picturesque, bachelor-home-confusion in the room, and as the various contents strike us, so we describe.

The fire has been mentioned, but not the round, bright, copper kettle, steaming on one hob, nor the white mysterious napkin-covered jug placed upon the other by Mr. Askew, as soon as he had divested himself of rifle and belt. A suspicious-looking tin hung on the front bar and made a simmering noise, while a fragrant perfume of lemons was mingled with faint wafts of lately exhaled nicotinean clouds. The fender and a large plate-warmer were full of covered dishes. Bacchus had taken possession of the lyre, for divers decanters and bottles stood upon a piccolo pianoforte, in company with a large, labelled jar, and a couple of paper-bound cedar boxes. Books, with Mudie's brand, fossils, rods, and landing nets, stuffed fish, foils, and boxing-gloves. A cornopean here, a flute there, violin case between the legs of the piano; while in one corner, its hollow obesity covered by green baize swaddling clothes, leaned back a huge double bass viol—all dumbly telling how Mr. Potter gave his time to wailing on the flute, sending out triumphant trumpet blasts from the cornet, and after relieving his mind with a few chords upon the piano, indulged in the creation of young thunder, as he drew the bow across the sonorous strings of the bass, and all during the large and small hours of the night, doubtless to the great delight of the only other parties who slept under the same roof—the rest of the house being let off in legal chambers pure and simple—to wit, Mrs. Dimple and her husband, the lady being engaged to clean and do for all the gentlemen of the house.

The room, in other respects, was comfortably, almost luxuriously, furnished; so amply, though, that when the gentlemen were seated at the table the waiter, from one of Fleet-street's taverns, had much difficulty in threading his way to and fro, as he deftly placed a dish here, handed a plate there, and noiselessly assisted to supply the wants of his patrons till, in a sonorous voice, Mr. Potter said—

"Clear away!" for he had eaten, and was filled.

His task being ended—according to regular custom the gentlemen contracting with the tavern-keeper for their meals—the *débris* of the feast were borne off, and the waiter withdrew, leaving Mr. Askew raising the napkin which covered the white jug, and carefully inspecting its contents; while Mr. Potter was, in a very slow and ponderous fashion, filling the bowl of a long-tubed pipe with the par-

ticularly mild tobacco he reserved for his own smoking.

"That's about right now, Potter," said Mr. Askew, after tasting the infusion for about the sixth time; "and now to take up your remarks made before dinner. You are out of sorts, Potter—you want change."

"No, I don't," said Mr. Potter, gruffly. "I want some of that stuff."

Mr. Askew filled his glass, and then passed the jug to his friend, who followed the example set; when Mr. Askew hopped across, seized the vessel, re-covered it with the napkin, and replaced it on the hob.

"Yes, you do," he said, returning to his seat, and lighting a cigar; "you want change—you said so last night."

Mr. Potter grunted, and made a feint of lighting his pipe.

"I propose," said Mr. Askew, "that we have a run down to Weybridge for a little trolling. What do you say?"

Mr. Potter did not speak: he only looked straight across at his friend, and deliberately winked. Then lighting a splint, he this time slowly lit his pipe, considering it a duty to smoke, but suffering a very martyrdom from the custom. Cigars he would get through in an extravagant fashion, by consuming them at both ends at once—burning one and nibbling the other, so as to reach the finis of something which disagreed with him terribly—while his pipes he filled very loosely, and often tapped on the bars, so as to get rid of a portion of the tobacco now and then. He had tried every description of pipe recommended by dealers—china, meerschaum, red clay, white clay, briar-root, long stems, short stems, straight stems, and curly stems; stems containing salt, stems containing wet sponge, or even water, but all in vain. Tobacco, save of the very mildest nature, invariably made Mr. Potter ill; though had you hinted at such a thing he would have been insulted.

The case was different with Mr. Askew, who smoked largely, and, finding all attempts at conversation result only in grunts from his friend, he contented himself with replenishing the glasses from time to time, and then nimbly re-covering the jug when placing it on the hob. There was a suppressed smile, though, upon his lip, and a merry twinkle in one corner of his eye, as, from the midst of a cloud of smoke, he watched his great friend struggling with his long pipe, and waited his time, for he had a point he meant to carry sooner or later.

At last Mr. Potter stood his pipe up in the corner, with the bowl resting in the fender, and sat upright in his chair, very white of visage, and stared blankly at his friend.

"Have another pipe, Potter," said Mr. Askew, lighting a fresh cigar.

"Not—not just at present," said Mr. Potter, faintly; "I—I'm afraid I rather over-exerted myself to-day."

"Want change," said Mr. Askew, shaking his head. "Try another pipe, and it will go off."

Mechanically Mr. Potter stretched out his hand

to his tobacco jar, took off the lid, and placed his hand therein, when he started forward and held the jar to the light.

"Why, this isn't my tobacco!"

"Nonsense, my dear fellow," said Mr. Askew, from his cloud. "Fill up, and have another; it will do you good."

"But I tell you, it isn't mine!" said Potter. "It has been changed. There, look at it," and he passed the jar to the imperturbable Askew.

"Why, my dear boy, you've never been] smoking this, have you?"

"Smoking it—yes; you know I have."

"Why, my dear Potter, it's the strongest cut cavendish. I couldn't smoke it myself without being ill."

"Then, somebody's been changing it," said Potter, huskily, as he gazed sternly at his friend. "Is this one of your games, Askew?"

"My dear Potter," exclaimed Askew, laying a hand upon his breast, "now do you think I would be guilty of such a childish trick? Why, look here—plenty of mild Turkish underneath! This wisp must have got in by mistake."

Mr. Potter sat and glared, and looked very ill; while, as if doing all he could to alleviate his friend's sufferings, Mr. Askew refilled his glass with the hot preparation, and by degrees the ghastly pallor wore off.

"I tell you what it is, Potter," said Mr. Askew, at last, "your digestion's a bit touched. Now, just be candid: you don't feel the thing, do you? That tobacco wouldn't have made you so white if you had been well."

"Perhaps you're right," said Mr. Potter, in a very faint voice still, for the symptoms had not quite passed away.

"Right! of course I am. Now, let's have a change—a week's fishing."

Mr. Potter, as his friend expected, shook his head. "Run down to Portland, if you like," he murmured.

"So will I, when I'm in a state of penal servitude," muttered Mr. Askew, and then, aloud—"No, no; come now, old fellow, fair play, you know. No fishing—no stone chipping!—that's not the sort of change we want. We require society—ladies' society, and friendly intercourse—a complete change from life in chambers. Now, what do you say to running down to Duxton?"

"What for?—nothing but chalk and gravel there," murmured Mr. Potter, with his eyes closed.

"What for? Why, what did old Jones say: 'Come when you will, dear boys, there's a place for you at our table.' He made a mistake in leaving us, but I don't think he could help it. Perhaps, after all, she married him. But, all the same, why should we desert an old chum?"

"Get booked ourselves, perhaps," said Mr. Potter.

"Potter, I'm ashamed of you, a man of your strength of mind, to talk in that cowardly, childish fashion. Let's go and see the poor chap. Think of the happy hours we used to spend together—think of the nights we have had! Come, now, what do you say?"

"Never comes near us."

"How can he bring a lady to a bachelor's chambers?"

"Come without her, then."

"Now, don't be unreasonable, Potter. I don't like matrimony; but when a man does devote his life to a fair enslaver, why—er—er—why—er—he slaves, I suppose," said Mr. Askew, who was evidently at a loss for an illustration.

"'Bout right there," said Mr. Potter, holding out his glass. "Jones always was a fool."

"Well, he wasn't strong-minded," said Mr. Askew, as he played the part of Ganymede. "Don't be frightened of it, old boy. I'll mix some more directly. This is the fresh Kinahan, and it's mild as milk."

Mr. Potter did not seem to be in the slightest degree afraid of the preparation, for he imbibed it largely, and evidently with beneficial effects, for he grew animated, and for some time combated his friend's proposition; but by degrees he gave way, more and more, till Mr. Askew exclaimed—

"Now, look here, I won't be hard on you; let's go down for two days."

"Well, only two, then," said Potter, pushing his glass towards his friend, who poured into it the last drops of the whiskey punch.

"No, only two days," said Mr. Askew.

"But, I say, though," exclaimed Mr. Potter, suddenly, "if I thought you had changed that tobacco, hang me if I'd go! There!"

"Now, don't be absurd, my dear fellow," said Mr. Askew. "Look here, a train starts at ten a.m."

"How do you know?"

"Looked, of course; and as there's nothing like hitting while the iron's hot, let's go to-morrow."

"No; send word first."

"Not a bit of it—to-morrow at ten, and we'll take pot luck. Now, no running away."

"Who, I? run back? Not I. You'd only be worrying for months if I did," said Mr. Potter.

And, by way of ratifying the agreement, Mr. Askew proceeded, by the help of lemons, hot water, whiskey, and sugar, to replenish the jug; while it was a reliable fact that at two o'clock the next morning a constable passing through the square saw a light shining through the curtains of Messrs. Potter and Askew's room, and smiled grimly as he listened to a very peculiar duet between a gentleman vocally disposed and a badly played flute, the theme being "Life's a Bumper!"

CHAPTER V.—WHY TOM BARNARD DID NOT LEAVE DUXTON.

IT is a very bad plan to think out aloud, though if you are in your own room it does not much matter; hence it was not of so much consequence that Tom Barnard, or as he generally styled himself T. Barnard, was uttering his thoughts, for he was not only alone in his own room, but in his dwelling, for his housekeeper was out seeing about some markets.

Tom Barnard was having his evening pipe, thinking over the events of the past month, and looking forward to the future.

"I believe I'm one of the lucky ones," he said.

"Here have I been here a whole month, and all I

have done is to make myself unpleasant where I wanted to win friendly feelings. Now, there's the old doctor cuts up rough because I've come, to begin with, and nearly insults me; then I give an adverse opinion to his in that inquest case, and some one goes and tells him; and one way and another everything goes wrong."

His pipe went out over this, so he refilled it.

"Now, look here: what do I want? To turn him out of his practice? Not a bit of it; only to get a respectable professional living. He might just as well have stretched out the hand of good fellowship, and given a fellow a chance. But, look here, all of you"—there was no one present, but, all the same, Tom Barnard thumped his hand down on the table—"I've come down here to make a practice, and I'll do it too, like a man; for I won't be discouraged by trifles. Stay here I will. So, there, now; and there's an end of it."

If Tom Barnard had been addressing a meeting instead of his own rather small stock of furniture, no doubt some remarks would have been made; for it was only on the preceding evening, on returning from town, that he had sat down disconsolately, and declared that he would give up, and go out as assistant to some one. He owned that a month was a very short time to test a place; but he could not help seeing how peculiar a place Duxton proved to be—how thoroughly prejudiced the Duxtonites were; and, though perhaps he was going a little too far, he had declared his opinion that they would sooner let old Smallbois kill them than that a young fellow like himself should cure them.

There was a good deal of truth, though, in his words; and it was in vain that he tried to look a



little hopefully to the future. He thought of how he had first planned to marry one of the doctor's daughters in a thoroughly business point of view; and then he thought of the quiet, little, demure face he had seen in the doctor's pew—a face from which

he had tried to get one glance of recognition, but all in vain; and, at last, quite out of heart, and disgusted with the whole place, he said he would give up.

When he arrived at that point, he went to bed—that being a most sensible proceeding, as it was so late—and the next morning he got up as a healthy young fellow of seven and twenty might be expected to rise, in very much better spirits; and that day matters happened to change the current of his thoughts.

"I've half a mind to try it for another month," said Tom Barnard, over his breakfast, which being finished, he set to and studied hard till dinner-time.

"A fortnight would show a fellow plainly enough whether he could do any good or not," he said, over his dinner at two o'clock, and then he went for an hour's constitutional.

"It's all up," said Tom, as he returned, and drew out his latch-key. "If I stop another week I shall go mad. I'll cut. Some one else may try."

As he spoke he entered his surgery, and half-started to see a very clean, grey-haired labourer's wife, who made him a profound curtsy.

"It's my master, John Coulthby, sir, if you please," said the old lady.

"Yes," said Tom, smiling.

"You see, sir, the owd doctor says as he can't do him no more good, and John's mortal put out, sir, because he say he sarved the doctor a good thretty year, and doctor ought to make he well agin."

"What's the matter with him?" said Tom.

"Well, sir, we don't kinder know. It's a sort of all-overish thing, and he don't get no strength, and he's sure doctor give him wrong physic."

"Humph!" ejaculated Tom, thoughtfully, "and how old is he?"

"Seventy-nine last Martlemas, sir," said the old lady.

And Tom had hard work to keep back a smile.

"Has Dr. Smallbois quite given over attending him?" said Tom.

"Yes, sir; he aint been anigh him these four weeks, and we should take it very kindly if you'd come."

"Well, I'll come," said Tom.

And having seen the old lady off, after learning that the cottage she came from was across the fields a couple of miles, he made up a bottle of mixture, smiling as he did so, and then set off.

He overtook the old lady in time to give her his hand in crossing the stepping stones over the river, when, with a smile that hardly hid a tear, the old lady said—

"Thank you kindly, sir. It's a good fifty year ago since my John used to want to do that same, and I used to laugh and skip from one to the other."

The rest of the walk was taken up with accounts of how "John" used to do the Smallbois' garden, and how dear Miss Mary would often walk across now to bring him a posy—for he was mortal fond o' flowers—and then she'd sit and read or talk to him as long as she dared, for she was a'most afraid to say her soul was her own at home.

Five minutes after, the old lady threw open the door of a scrupulously clean room, and Tom felt

slightly startled on seeing the object of their conversation sitting by the bedside of a very old man, whose cramped but still massive hands held, as they rested on the counterpane, a bouquet of prettily-arranged flowers.

There was a slight flush on the young girl's face as she rose, said a few pleasant words of parting, returned Tom's salute, and was walking away, when he hurried after her.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Smallbois," he said, hastily; "but I feel bound to offer some apology for visiting your father's old servant—it was not of my seeking."

"I did not think it was," was the pleasant, frank reply; and Tom's heart gave a thump or two as he gazed down at the animated little face. "It is very kind of you to come to the poor old man, and it is not from neglect that papa does not visit him. Poor old Jones has nothing the matter with him but old age, papa says."

"Exactly," said Tom. "I could tell that from the poor old lady's words as we came."

"But if you could talk to him, and cheer him a little, and let him think some one took a little interest in his case, I should—I mean it would be very good of you."

There was a little deepening of the rosy tint in the pleasant face at this point—perhaps due to Tom's earnest gaze, as he exclaimed—

"I will come and see him very often." And then, feeling very dreamy, Tom stood looking after the quiet little figure hurrying away, till he was roused by the voice of the old lady.

Tom sat for a good hour listening to the old man's complaints most patiently, because every now and then he said something about Miss Mary; and then leaving the stimulant medicine he had brought, he rose to go, the old fellow looking quite bright and happy.

"I don't know how we shall ever get you paid, sir," quavered the old man.

"Oh!" said Tom, pleasantly, "you must pay me now."

"Mary, my lass, there's a shillin' an' a sixpence in the caddy—give it the doctor; it's all we've got, sur, till the 'lowance day; but if it was double, you should have it."

"No," said Tom, "I do not want that. Give me that sprig of geranium out of your bunch, and I shall feel that I'm paid."

The old man shaded his eyes, and looked closely at Tom for a few moments, and then, with trembling hand, he withdrew the scarlet blossom.

"It's as bright and good as she is!" he quavered; "and, if that's what you mean, why, Heaven bless you, and I hope you'll be a good one to her. I'll—I'll put in a good word for you next time she comes."

"If you say a word," said Tom, sternly, "I shall never come any more."

"Then I won't," quavered the old fellow; "but good luck to you, sir—good luck to you—good—"

Tom heard no more, for he was now on his way back, feeling very much disposed, after all, to stay; for what a sweet, pleasant face that was—how natural and nice her manner was when she spoke,

and— "Hang it all, I won't go yet!" he exclaimed aloud. "There's something else to live for in this life besides money-getting, and I've got a little courage left in me yet."

Tom began to whistle as he strode on—a very



unmedical proceeding, and then he stopped short, half pleased, and, at the same time, half sorry, for there, just across the ford, and seated upon the bank, was Mary Smallbois.

"Well, she's a stunning little girl," he muttered, "but I didn't think she was one of the sort to throw herself at your head. All right, though; a bit of a flirt won't hurt me."

He crossed the stepping-stones, and was about to utter some light complimentary remark, when the shade of trouble that crossed Mary's face, and the appealing look she gave, checked the words upon his lips.

"Please, Mr. Barnard, don't think it strange because I'm here," she said, plaintively. "I did try very hard to walk home, till I fainted. I slipped upon the wet stones, and I'm afraid I've sprained my ankle."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Tom, earnestly. "Why, poor little darling, I *am* grieved. How could I be such a brute!" he muttered. Then aloud, "Are you in much pain?"

"Ye-es—a—a good deal," was the reply, in a quivering voice; "but if you would not mind calling, and asking them at home to send the brougham down the lane—"

"What! And leave you here like this? Not if my name's Tom Barnard," he cried, heartily. "I've been praying for patients; but, 'fore George, Miss Smallbois, I'd rather never have had another than that this should have happened."

The wistful little face was turned to him, as he knelt down by her side, and a shade of trouble, and then a faint blush came as her eyes fell upon the sprig of geranium.

"If you would please hurry home and send help," she pleaded.

"Don't be hard on me!" he exclaimed, imploringly. "I will be very guarded in all I say. I am only a poor surgeon—nothing more; so, pray, do not refuse my aid because I am a stranger. You begged me to give it to that poor old man."

Then, with the poor girl trembling like a leaf, he gently raised her from where she sat, and bore her nearer to the bank, where, after setting her down, he cut the boot from her foot, which was already terribly swollen.

"There, my child," he said, with a quiet earnestness that won upon her; "you are enough of a doctor's daughter to know that I am prescribing rightly. Let the cold stream bathe it for ten minutes, and then I will bandage it tightly, and try and get you home."

Poor little Mary! She was in too much agony to oppose; and there, for the next quarter of an hour, she sat, sick and faint, but with her poor little heart beating at times very rapidly, for there was a strong arm round her, and at times, do all she would to stay it, her little head would go down upon Tom Barnard's shoulder. And yet, she could not but feel how gentle and chivalrous and respectful he was; though all the time he was envying the silver dancing ripples of the stream as they played over and kissed the painful little ankle and instep, till, listening to the poor girl's request, Tom tightly bound the injured joint with his handkerchief.

"I think I could walk now," said Mary; "if you would lead me to the lane, I could rest on the stile till help came."

"Doctors do not leave their patients half attended to," said Tom, quietly, though his voice trembled as he gazed in the sweet, troubled little face. "You must leave yourself in my hands. There, do not mind; I am very strong."

Mary would have protested, but she felt too faint and weak, and the blood flushed slightly to her cheeks as she felt herself lifted tenderly from the ground, to be carried as easily as though she were a child for some twenty yards; when, just as the sound of a man's voice fell upon Tom Barnard's ear, Mary uttered a faint cry.

"Did I give you pain?" asked Tom, earnestly.

"No; oh, no!" was the reply, in trembling tones; "but let me try to walk—here is papa."

CHAPTER VI.—THE DRESS OF PUNCH.

MORNING was up, and, taking into consideration that he was appearing in such a gloomy place as Jenkin's Inn, he looked particularly rosy. He had evidently been having an early wash, for the soot-peppered grass plot behind the rails of the square was wet and splashy, and the steam, due to his exertions, yet hung amongst the sparrow-haunted, spiky shrubs.

Now, morning, being a mythological character, partook of the nature of that exceedingly moral class, and one of his first acts was to stare, in the most indelicate way, right through the attic window of the room where slept one Mrs. Dimple, the lady who cared for chambers, and acted the part of housemaid and landress to Messrs. Potter and Askew.

There was naturally a blush appeared upon Mrs. Dimple's cheek, and, starting up, she hastily drew the grimy dimity curtain by the bedside, when the blush disappeared as if by magic. Her next act was to nudge her husband, who bore the nudging with great equanimity, for it had to be repeated a dozen times before he rose and went off to his work. As for Mrs. Dimple, she lay watching the hand of the Dutch clock, now pointing to a quarter to six, and trying to understand how it was that, when she lay watching it, the hand moved so slowly, while when she closed her eyes, it took long leaps of quarters and half-hours. It was, however, a problem that would not be solved, and, giving it up at last, Mrs. Dimple descended at half-past seven, broom in hand, towards Messrs. Potter and Askew's room.

The place was very dark as she entered, and, picking her way, she went cautiously across the room to draw back the curtains.

"Such a nasty smell!" said Mrs. Dimple. "There's smoke enough, even now, for an—"

Mrs. Dimple probably meant to make allusions to fires or eruptions, but she only shrieked wildly, as something struck her violently, and she was dashed back beneath the piano in a sitting position on the violin case, when, to her excited imagination, it seemed that the powers of darkness were pouring upon her water, lumps of sugar, spirits, and various drinking and conservative vessels, which shattered and splintered loudly, to the accompaniment of a loud disarrangement of the fire irons and the fender.

The curtains being violently dragged aside, the extent of the mischief was revealed. Mr. Potter, who had started suddenly from the chair in which he had passed the night, having overturned the round table upon the frightened woman; while Mr. Askew was seen rising from beside the sofa, where, apparently, from some strange confusion of ideas, he had passed the night, with his feet upon a cushion, and his head upon a spittoon.

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.

And Manchester and Liverpool.

The Spider of Duxton.

BEING THE ADVENTURES OF THREE BELLES,
THREE BEAUX, AND A MARRIED COUPLE.

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)



"CONFOUND it all, don't make such a noise, woman," said Mr. Askew, testily.

And then, with his friend's assistance, he set free the prisoner, who was pinned down by the table edge.

Mrs. Dimple ejaculated loudly, but her remarks were not heeded by the friends, who, looking pale and miserable, hurried off to their respective bedrooms, little wotting that about this hour, calm, clear-headed, bland, and with steady nerves, Mr. Jones, once their companion in such dissipations, was indulging himself with an easy shave; while Mrs. Jones was performing tricks of legerdemain with rustling paper in her hair.

One had just struck by the Inn clock when Messrs. Potter and Askew took their places at the breakfast-table, both mentally accusatory at having allowed the insidious beverage which Mr. Askew had brewed to gain so complete an ascendancy. But the reign had been short, and both friends declared that it was for the last time.

As the clock struck, with a complete unanimity of purpose, Messrs. Potter and Askew drew out their watches, to find that they were run down, and therefore they were unable to prove that the clock was wrong. There was a kind of subdued melancholy in his aspect as Mr. Potter looked at Mr. Askew, and yawned, his friend responding after the same fashion. Grilled fowl, ham, eggs, toast, and rolls, all were there. But appetite was wanting; and they sat, sipping their coffee very slowly.

"I feel quite upset with last night's march-out," said Mr. Potter.

"Ah! you do look pale," said Mr. Askew. "I suppose it's the excitement that has a little upset you."

Then, as if to set a good example, he seized an egg, removed the top, took a bite out of a piece of toast, and then partook of a spoonful of rich yellow yolk.

The act was well meant, but it proved a failure. That one spoonful sufficed; and after sitting gazing at one another with cadaverous faces for half an hour, and then pretending to glance at the morning's news, chairs were thrust back, the waiter summoned, and soda-water took the place of the untouched breakfast.

"I often think," said Mr. Potter, as he sat dolefully sipping his cheerful beverage—"I often think we should be better off in the married state."

"Wants testing," said Mr. Askew; "but let's do as we said last night—go and see Jones."

"Did we say or do anything last night?" said Potter, who now rested his aching head upon his hand.

"Of course! We said we'd go and see Jones."

"Bother Jones," growled Mr. Potter.

"Can't go down by the first train, anyhow," said Mr. Askew.

"Perhaps you'll make a note of that profound discovery," grumbled Mr. Potter.

"Well, but let's see," said Mr. Askew, referring to the hieroglyphics of Bradshaw, and frequently acting like the trains they referred to—getting off the line. "Let's see, there's—yes—no—yes—no, that only goes as far as Lowbridge. Can't go by that—can we?"

Mr. Potter threw himself back on the sofa, and uttered a violent snort.

"Here we are!" cried Mr. Askew. "'A. Four o'clock down express stops at Duxton on Thursdays.' The very thing—but, let's see, this isn't Thursday, it's Wednes—no, it isn't, yesterday was—Tut—tut—tut, how confused my head is this morning!"

"I wish to goodness you'd leave off buzzing over that book," said Mr. Potter.

"It's all right, old fellow; here's a train at four. Just get there nicely to dinner. Now, what do you say?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Potter, with a terrible yawn.

"I did not say what *did* you say—but what *do* you say?" cried Mr. Askew.

"Nothing, I tell you," growled the other, whose head ached furiously.

"Well, but about starting?" said Mr. Askew, finding his big friend would not be driven. "What do you say?"

"Oh, my head!" groaned Potter.

"Never mind your head—the change will take that off. Now, let's go. They said they would be delighted to see us—and we want no fuss. There come, rouse up. Two volunteer corps there; take our uniforms—reviews and meetings. Geology, too—strata and deposits. Oolitic, Duxton, eh?"

"No," groaned Mr. Potter; "chalk."

"All right, cretaceous. Now, get up and see about your things. I wouldn't forget a geological hammer, old fellow. Come, rouse up."

But Mr. Potter's rousing up consisted in his raising his heavy head, and then laying it down again, with a growl like that of an ill-used bear.

"I'd take my portmanteau," said Mr. Askew, returning to the charge, and trying his friend upon another weak point. "Take a good supply of things, too—company, perhaps. Joney always liked doing the thing handsome, so we won't put him to the blush. That new dress coat come home?"

"Yes."

"Sprig vest, too—the velvet, I mean?"

"Yes; they came home together," said Mr. Potter, feebly.

"Sweet thing! Stick in a few pairs of kids, too. Country-town ones always split."

Mr. Potter was thawing visibly, but still he did not move; and Mr. Askew hesitated as to what he should say next, when his eccentric eye rolled round the room—brightened—flashed—and then a smile beamed on the little man's countenance as, in a careless tone, he said—

"I'm going to pack up now, old fellow; and, I say, I don't think I'd forget my flute."

That last political stroke did it; for, as Mr. Askew glanced back, he saw his huge friend rise and go to the drawer in which he kept his duets for flute and piano. Then, listening at the door, he heard him fit together his flute, and run up an arpeggio in a most doleful minor key. Then there was the sound of the instrument being fitted back in its case, and Mr. Askew had just time to retreat, when his friend followed him, to try over his bunch of keys to find one to fit the flute case.

This accomplished, Mr. Askew hurried him off to pack up, nearly undoing his former work by offending his dignity; but he had the satisfaction of soon hearing him banging clothes into his portmanteau, when, thinking that it was time to study self, he did so by packing plenty of requisites, and then strapping together a couple of walking-sticks, an umbrella, and two fishing-rods, being evidently under the impression that he might just as well study his own weak points as his friend's.

CHAPTER VII.—EN VOYAGE.

AS everyone very well knows, trains are always exactly punctual to their accredited time when would-be passengers are late, and *vice versa*; and, of course, it is from no desire to parade that punctuality that there is a great clock over the entrance to the Great Sou'-Sou'-West-by-South Railway—a clock whose hands stood in the following positions—to wit, the long hand at the figure one, and the short hand at the figure four, as a four-wheeled cab dashed up at the rate of full five miles and a half an hour, and was checked at the door of the first class booking-office.

The driver seemed to have full confidence in his steed, for he threw the reins down upon its sharp, bony back, as the poor brute hung its heavy head to give it a rest, after having it pulled up, and tugged, and dragged, while its master jumped down, rattled open the door with noise enough to bring out a couple of porters, who confronted Mr. Askew and his friend, as they stood watching their luggage lowered from the roof.

"Let's see: five? Eh, cabby?" said Mr. Askew.

"Yes, sir; five, sir," said cabby, touching his hat.

"All right," said Mr. Askew. "I'll take that

bundle of sticks and umbrellas in my hand. Now, then, how much?"

"What you said will do, sir."

"What I said? I said nothing."

"Oh, yes, you did, sir," said the man, reproachfully; "you said five, sir."

"Pooh!—pooh! Nonsense, man! I was counting the luggage. There are three shillings."

The money was placed in the man's hand, but the hand still remained stretched forth.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" said Mr. Askew, pompously.

"T'other two bob, sir."

"What for?" exclaimed Mr. Askew, indignantly.

"What for? Why, for bringing you gents and all your luggage. I knowed you was gents, or I wouldn't have took the job," added the man, soapy.

"Pooh, nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Potter. "Come along in, Askew, or we shall be late."

"But you aint a-going without paying the lorful fare, air you?" cried cabby.

"You've had your fare, my good man," said Mr. Potter, imposingly; "now go."

"No, I aint had my lorful fare; the gent said as he'd give me five, so that's my lorful fare. If gents aint got enough to pay for their keb, and their railway too, they oughter walk, and not rob a poor, hard-working man."

Now, as this was all said in a very loud key, with plenty of listeners, and cabby had so much confidence in his horse that he left it, and followed the gentlemen right in, it grew decidedly unpleasant.

"What the deuce did you say anything about the fare for?" said Mr. Potter.

"I didn't," said Askew; "I was counting the luggage."

"Counting be hanged!" said Mr. Potter, growing choleric. "We shall be having a row, and miss the train. Where's a policeman?"

"Now, then," said cabby, winking at one of the porters, "air you going to pay my fare, or am I to drive one of you to the pleece-station?"

"Haddn't we better pay?" grumbled Mr. Potter.

"I never allow myself to be imposed upon!" said Mr. Askew, swelling out to the great endangering of the buttons of his coat. "The rascal crawled here at a snail's pace, and as to five shillings—why it's monstrous!"

"Now, air you going to pay?" said cabby again; for his attention had just been called to his vehicle by one of the company's officers.

"There, be off!" said Mr. Potter, thrusting a florin in the man's hand; "but it's a gross imposition, and I have a good mind to summon you."

"No, you aint," said the man, grinning, as he moved off, "you know better; 'taint the first time I've had to do with you. How about that there box of bones?"

"Here, let us come through," said Mr. Potter, turning very red.

"Soon as this train's gone, sir," said an official.

"Now, then, be off," said a grinning porter to the cabman.

"Wanted to do me, he did, when I took him and a box of bones to Jenkin's Inn."

"Now, then, go on—d'yer hear?"

"Nattomy bones—boxful atop of my keb!" shouted the man.

"Now, cabby!" cried a policeman.

"Churchyard bones!" roared cabby, for a final shot; when, as a matter of course, that section of the British public within hearing immediately centred its regards upon the heroes of this wordy firing, coupling them directly with dissecting rooms and anatomical museums; for, of course, the said public could not be expected to know that at the time in question Mr. Potter was only the owner of some fine fossils from the lias, including the caudal vertebrae of an extraordinariosaurian.

But Mr. Potter let the people stare; and, with a fierce scowl, he strode up to the pigeon-hole.

"Two first-class to Duxton."

"Five thirty," said a sharp voice.

"How much?" said Mr. Potter.

"Five thirty!" reiterated the sharp voice; but this time a little louder.

"I said two first-class to Duxton," repeated Mr. Potter, thinking that he had been misunderstood.

"Five-thirty!" roared the sharp-voiced clerk.

"But—"

The word was hardly out of Mr. Potter's lips when the door was slammed violently down, and the face Mr. Potter turned upon his friend was of such a nature that the latter preserved a discreet silence, after hinting that he supposed they were too late—an assertion corroborated by one of the company's porters, with the further comforting words that they had an hour and a quarter to wait.

Most people know how agreeable a resting place a railway terminus is for such parties as have missed one train and have to pass a long interval before another is despatched. The friends evidently felt their position keenly. Mr. Askew addressed a remark to a man with the word "Interprète" worked in silver upon his coat-collar, but he only shook his head, and passed on. Mr. Potter strolled up to Smith and Son's book-stall, but the lad in charge watched him so superciliously that he walked off to where, through a door, he could see a clerk writing at a desk, while a couple of porters were playing at catch-ball with divers small parcels, and shouting unintelligible words, when a ruffian voice roared "B'yer leave!" and at the same moment the corner of a picture-case was driven on noiseless wheels into the small of Mr. Potter's back.

Mr. Potter yielded to his anger for a few moments, and raised his umbrella as if to strike; but, upon second thoughts, he walked off to where his friend was gazing disconsolately at a door labelled "Second-class waiting-room."

They both turned shuddering away, for the dismal spot seemed to whisper of a coming catastrophe, and that this was the place where the bodies would be laid until they were claimed.

A little farther along the platform, where the wind blew coldly, and waiting engines hissed like a myriad of asps, they came to the waiting-room devoted to first-class sufferers—a place like the dining-hall of a superior lunatic asylum, with its padded walls and funereal, tomb-like chimney pieces of dark marble, evidently petrified brawn, the sections of pigs' tails and ears being distinctly visible through the polish.

Beneath these mausoleum-like structures were roaring fires, strongly suggestive of swift currents of air, dresses drawn against red-hot bars, shrieking maidens, rushing flames, and afterwards writhing masses of something charred and blackened, ready to sicken the beholder.

Mr. Askew tried to change the current of his thoughts as he stood and warmed himself, and he did; but only for another horrible suggestion to seize his brain. For there was nothing home-like or cheerful about those fires; and now the little man felt how similar they must be to the plan adopted by the French for reviving the classic cine-real urns, after reducing the defunct, coffin, and all, to ashes.

They were capital fires, too, but they sent forth no heat; they only rushed and raged up the chimney, to the bringing in of keen draughts from the platform, so that when Mr. Potter drew a chair in front of one, and sat down, sulkily, he felt as if he were on the march, with an awkward brother private inserting the keen point of a bayonet in the nape of his neck, and a stream of cold blood running down his spinal column—for, of course, the blood would run cold at so sharp an application. No fender, no fire-irons—just as if it were possible for any one to sit comfortably beside a fire without a poker wherewith to clear the bottom out and raise the coals, so that they might twinkle and glow upon the poker human. But, then, after all, these were not what we should call fires, only ravenous ton-a-week devouring furnaces—monsters showing their red, dragon-like tongues mockingly at the traveller weary, who was compelled by ill fortune or ignorance to await a train.

"I can't stand this," said Mr. Askew, at last, to himself. "I must have a lark of some kind, or I shall go melancholy mad. Come along, Potter," he said aloud.

And together they strolled on to the platform once more, for Mr. Potter to make a dead set at the advertisements on the walls, and, after reading a few, to give a shiver, upon learning that if he liked to invest threepence he might secure one thousand pounds for his next of kin, should he be cut to pieces upon the present auspicious journey.

"These things ought not to be stuck up there," said Mr. Potter, fiercely. "Set one thinking of accidents and smashes."

"Shouldn't read 'em, then," said Mr. Askew. "Come along!"

"Come along, indeed! Let's go back home. Where's a man to come along to?"

"Come and get something to eat," said Mr. Askew, who had just been struck by a happy thought.

"Eat!" cried Mr. Potter, who now awakened to the fact that he had had no breakfast, and was very hungry—"something to eat? Ah, to be sure! Let's have it. But where?"

Mr. Askew wagged his head towards the refreshment room, which they entered, to find it perfectly empty, not even an attendant being visible.

For a few minutes they stood gazing at the delicacies spread before them like a banquet; decanters bearing labels hung from their necks, like blind beggars of Bethnal or any other green; long-necked

claret bottles, showy of capsule, looking as if they had never been so low in life as to tenant a cellar; tall tea and coffee urns, that might have owned connection with the cinereal furnaces in the waiting-room, even as the two glass shades before the travel-



lers evidently contained the unpetrified material of which the little mausoleums were composed; dogs-eared sandwiches, very curly and crisp, oozy preparations of jam; ancient cocks, or hens—the author is not certain upon this point, but they were certainly not chickens—cold sausages, and lastly, buns; but no attendant present to hand them upon the end of a long toasting-fork to the visitors, as if they were a kind of bear fresh from some zoological pit.

There was a loud giggling proceeding from a half-closed door upon the left, and upon Mr. Askew coughing slightly, three damsels charged out with a rush and favoured the travellers with that peculiar, suspicious look that had already fallen to Mr. Potter's share at the book-stall, one of the damsels at the same time casting her eyes carefully over the electro forks and spoons.

"Now, my dears," said Mr. Askew, gallantly, "what have you to give us?"

Mr. Potter not speaking, but giving a dissatisfied, deavouring look over the counter.

A young lady with a hooked nose—contrary way hooked—and a very frizzly head of hair, gave the frizzly head a slight toss, moved her hand gracefully over the banquet spread, as if to say, feast and be thankful, and then proposed pork-pie.

"Um—m—m, pork-pie, cold, jellyfied, hard, indigestible, and with a fine flavour of bad pomatum in the fat! Thanks, no," said Mr. Askew, as his business eye rolled round and rested for a moment each upon the red triangle of Bass and the friendly hand of Allsop. "Have you any soup? Hot soup?"

"We always serve our soup hot, sir," said the young lady, pertly. "Now, James!"

James made his appearance in the shape of a waiter, whose aspect betokened wear—hard wear; his head had as much hair worn off it as his coat

had nap, while, but for the known smuttiness of the London atmosphere, remarks might have been made about the state of his cravat, shirt front, and the napkin with which he pretended to whisk a few crumbs off the set-out table, behind which, after a whisper from the damsel, he managed to imprison the travellers.

"Look out, James," whispered the damsel. "Don't like the look of them; got in here on the sly."

James gave several nods and winks, expressive of his knowledge of things in general, and soon after he placed a couple of little tureens before the friends, whisked off the covers, pushed forward spoons, and as he did so took a mental inventory of the rest of the plate upon the little table.

"I don't think we shall want them," said Mr. Askew, as by way of temptation the waiter now arranged before the guests one of the cold roast antique cocks, a tongue, and a very shiny pigeon-pie, with a general looseness of lid, and an ample display of scraggy claw.

"Don't take 'em away," said Mr. Potter, who was very soupy; "I may pick a bit."

"Bring up a bottle of good fair claret," said Mr. Askew; and, as the waiter turned to go, the rosy little man raised the lid of the pie and peeped in, to discover several mummified scraps of dry bird and steak, lying beneath a hollow dome of parchmenty crust.

"Almost fossiliferous, Potter," said Mr. Askew.

"Humph!" said his friend, who was growling over his soup, but not so much as did Mr. Askew when he plunged a spoon into the peculiar, gluey preparation before him, and fished up one of the vertebrae of the beast of whose tail it was supposed to be composed.

But, like his friend, Mr. Askew made the best of their bad bargain, and sipped, cautiously glancing round, to find that every act of himself and friend was being watched, either by one of the maidens or the waiter, who now brought the claret, and extricated the cork with a loud plop!

"Not such a very bad glass of wine, my boy," said Mr. Askew, tasting, and then holding up the ruby fluid to light, before once more taking a little interest in the pie.

A couple of travellers coming in now to partake of "bitter," as they called it, the attention of the waiter was taken off the friends for a few minutes, so that they were able to finish the soup in peace, after which Mr. Potter, still feeling unappeased, began to hack off the wings and some of the fowl's breast; Mr. Askew carving the tongue, but, apparently still tempted by the pie, he once more raised the crust, which came up bodily, and peeped inside.

"Why don't you leave that mummy-case alone?" growled Mr. Potter; "you'll have to pay for it directly."

"All right," said his friend.

And then they made together a far more respectable luncheon than they had made breakfast, in spite of the superiority of the viands at the latter meal. The appearance of the "chicken" was spoiled, a gap made in the tongue, and there was

only another glass of claret left in the bottle, when the first bell rang for the 5.30 train.

Mr. Askew jumped up.

"I'll take tickets—you settle with the man," he exclaimed, and bustled out of the refreshment-room, but pursued by the waiter.

"Now, sir! If you please!" cried James.

"My friend will pay," cried Mr. Askew.

And the waiter hurried back to where Mr. Potter was finishing the last glass of wine.

"Well? How much?" said Mr. Potter, gruffly.

"Two soups, sir—two shillings; two chicken and tongue, sir—three shillings, sir; bottle of santy-steffy—four shillings, sir; nine shillings, if you please, sir."

With a growl, caused more by the trouble than a dislike to paying, Mr. Potter made an effort to get out his purse; when, with sudden excitement, the waiter shouted out—

"I thought as much. Here, miss, it's just as I said: I counted 'em ten minutes ago, and there was sixteen pieces on the table, and now there's only ten. There's four forks and two desserts gone. Now, then, you sir, we've got you at last!"

"What's the matter?" said a stout stranger in black; for Mr. Potter was speechless with indignation.

"Matter, sir!" Why, we've been losin' forks and spoons wholesale; and now we've got one of 'em in the fact—t'other's bolted."

"Why, you infernal scoundrel!" cried Mr. Potter; "do you dare to insinuate—"

"Gently, there!—would you?" cried the waiter; who was now reinforced by the presence of a man in white—an imitation of a *chef*—and a fussy individual, evidently just summoned by the three damsels.



"Here, where's my friend?" cried Mr. Potter.

"He's made his lucky, that's what he's done," said the waiter.

"Fetch a policeman," said the fussy individual.

"And, James, if you value your place, don't let that

man go. He's been here before—he's a regular swind—"

This was too much for Mr. Potter, who made a savage rush at the fussy individual. There was a shrieking trio from the three damsels, a crash, and then Mr. Askew beheld a tableau, formed by Mr. Potter, angry and struggling, held back by the waiter and white-robed *chef*, each having seized the irate gentleman by the side of his overcoat, out of which Mr. Potter was fast emerging; only that he could not free his arms. The three damsels were clinging together, like affrighted graces in modern attire; the portly stranger was looking on; and the fussy individual, in avoiding Mr. Potter, had dashed behind the little table, swept off glasses, plate, bottles, and the pigeon pie, and now lay upon his back, wildly calling for the police, and adjuring the waiter and the cook to hold "that madman tight."

CHAPTER VIII.—SOMEBODY.

"HALLO—hallo!" cried Mr. Askew. "Why, what's the row?"

"Oh, here's t'other one!" cried the waiter. "Get up, sir, and lay hold on him!"

But his master did not stir.

"What does all this mean, Potter?" exclaimed Askew.

"These scoundrels declare I've taken some of the plate!" cried Mr. Potter.

"Pooh!—absurd!—nonsense!" said Askew. "Loose the gentleman directly. Some mistake. Here, you, sir, get up; you'll drag all the rest of the things off the table, directly, if you hold by that cloth. Here, don't be stupid. Potter!" he exclaimed, to his struggling friend, "it's time we were off."

Mr. Askew's authoritative words were not without effect; the proprietor rose to his feet, the waiter loosed his grasp of Mr. Potter's coat, as also did the *chef*; and Mr. Potter began to smooth his ruffled feathers.

"Now, then," said Mr. Askew, "about this plate: what's missing?—look sharp, for we've only about a minute. And, if you make us lose this train, I'll have an action against you for loss of time."

"Why, there's six pieces of our plate gone!" exclaimed the fussy individual; "but why is there not a policeman here?"

"Policeman! I'll police you, if two gentlemen can't come here without being insulted!"

"I believe he's got 'em, sir!" cried the waiter bobbing behind his employer, as Mr. Askew made at him.

"Have you counted the plate?" said Mr. Askew.

"Counted?" said the waiter, "of course we have. There was sixteen on it, and now there's only—"

"Eight—nine," said Mr. Askew, hastily, "and seven on the floor—six down by that broken pie-dish. We'll summons them for this, Mr. Potter; but, have you paid?"

Mr. Potter had not paid, so Mr. Askew threw down a sovereign upon the table, and seized his friend by the arm, while the waiter stared at the proprietor humbly, and the proprietor stared at the waiter furiously, the three damsels exclaiming, in chorus—

"Well, I never did!"

"Really, gentlemen—" began the proprietor.

"Any more for the 'umpsey—'ugby—'rawtow and 'xton train?" shouted a voice.

"Come along, Potter," said Mr. Askew.

And, with a sharp run, they were just able to get their seats, as one of the glass bubble-lamps was thrust in from the top, and a heavy step was heard to go thumping along overhead.

"Disgraceful noise, gentlemen," said a thick voice; and, to their great annoyance, the friends found themselves sitting opposite to the portly stranger who had been a witness of the refreshment-room scene. He was a pompous man, in the glossiest of black, florid, white-neckclothed, and exuberant. "The directors ought to see to it. Very bad for the nerves. We shareholders have not voice enough in the directorate."

The voice in which he spoke was thick, smooth, and unctuous, and it made Mr. Askew think of the refreshment-room soup. It was not very light in the carriage, but the glass bubble shed enough, as they glided by the platform, to show the friends that the evidently self-satisfied speaker smiled affably, and waved about a portion of a massive gold watch-chain, which was gracefully festooned about his waistcoat, so that the links twinkled and glittered.

"Ah!" continued the speaker, "you would doubtless suggest that the lamp men should wear india-rubber shoes."

Neither of the friends replied, for, at that moment, a shock-headed porter leaped on the step, and shouted—

"Any gent here as belongs to a portmanter—a little black un?"

"Yes—yes, I do!" cried Mr. Potter, leaping up, as if the portmanteau, in right of possession, demanded his instant services.

The porter had evidently more to say, but all that the travellers caught was the word "van," for the train was now sweeping by the end of the platform, and the stout porter, who had evidently had his mind upon a gratuity, was compelled to leap off.

But the inmates of the carriage did not observe that, for as Mr. Potter leaped up, it was only to sit down again instantly, since, being tall, and not having removed his hat, it came in contact with the roof and was crushed down over his eyes, bringing forth from the wearer an angry ejaculation; for if there is any one thing annoying to an Englishman, it is a blow upon the glossy covering fashion has designed for his head.

Mr. Potter's was not the only expletive; for the portly stranger also exclaimed loudly, in consequence of the former having been very unguarded as to where he set his foot.

"It is nothing, gentlemen—nothing," exclaimed the stranger, as Mr. Potter growled out an apology, and smoothed his hat. "Don't apologise, pray; accidents will happen," he continued, urbanely, "even in refreshment rooms."

The travellers winced slightly, and glanced at their fellow-passenger, who was grinding his teeth, and baring them right down to their golden settings; for, after all, if there is a sharp pain in this world,

after toothache, commend us to a crushed corn for nerve racking, and a twinge and shock that must be felt to be believed in.

"Rather an unpleasant affair, that, in the refreshment-room," said the stranger, at last, as the pain seemed to wear off.

"Unpleasant, eh?" growled Mr. Potter. "I call it abominable! But, where the dickens did those forks come from, for there were only ten when the waiter counted them?"

"They seemed to me to come out of that pie when it fell," said the stranger. "It looked to me like a trick."

Mr. Potter glared at his friend as he recalled more than one practical joke of which he had been the victim, and also that Mr. Askew had appeared to take a great deal of interest in the pie; but Mr. Askew's plump face was the very personification of innocence, and he met his friend's glare without moving a muscle.

"I believe you're right; they must have come out of there," growled Potter. "Some one must have been up to some clown's trick or other, eh, Askew?"

"Well, it's hardly fair to ask me," said Mr. Askew, innocently. "I was not there, you know—I was getting the tickets."

Mr. Potter glared at him again; but Mr. Askew was now whistling very softly, and gazing out of the window as the train sped past the maze of sidings, points, and switches; past the hermit high up in his glass hut—the pale-faced pointsman who lives in momentary dread of arrest for having turned the wrong handle, and killed and wounded some unknown number of his fellow-creatures—past empty carriages, full trucks, engines in and out of hospital; engines cold and weary-looking, engines hot, steamy, and active; up on viaducts amongst sooty roof and chimney pot; down in cuttings, with an earthy wall ever seeming to rush by; and then, with a wild shriek, off and away for Duxton, the scene to be of many an adventure for the three gentlemen seated in that first-class compartment—for, strangers now, they little thought of the coming events that had as yet not even cast a shadow before.

There was silence now for awhile as the train increased in speed. The portly stranger evidently wanted to talk, but Mr. Askew still gazed thoughtfully from the window; while Mr. Potter, having mounted a travelling-cap, still kept on smoothing his injured hat, and entered another item or two in a mental ledger of his own, in which he told himself he kept Mr. Askew's account; and if ever he could bring well home to him one of those puerile practical jokes, why, then—

"Sir," said the stranger, at this moment.

And Mr. Potter turned sharply, to find his *vis-à-vis* flourishing a large gold or silver-gilt snuff-box, and gazing at him sternly.

"Sir, you suffer from indigestion," he exclaimed, to Mr. Potter's great discomposure. "I saw it at a glance, sir. There is a peculiarity in your countenance evident to the practised even in this light—a light which is a disgrace to a railway company."

Here the stranger replaced his snuff-box, and brought from its resting-place, beneath his cambric

shirt-frill, a massive double gold eye-glass, to wave it gracefully towards the glass bubble.

"There is a peculiarity, sir," continued the stranger, "which bespeaks the abnormal state of the absorbents, the hepatic symptoms are plainly to be seen—in fact, the gastric region requires tone, sir—tone. Perhaps you have noticed it, sir?" he continued, turning to Mr. Askew.

"Told him so last night," said that gentleman, with his eccentric eye twinkling, for he felt safe now that his friend could not back out of the visit. "But, there, he devours enough to put any region out of order!"

Mr. Potter did not condescend to notice this remark, but his scowl was majestic.

"A very common thing, my dear sir," said the portly gentleman, lifting a very glossy, broad-brimmed hat, rather curled at the sides, and then arranging his whitish-gray hair with the gold eye-glass before he relinquished it, and once more took snuff in a manner that the courtiers of the four Georges might have envied. "We are, all of us, more or less addicted to the pleasures of the table. Remember the worthies of classic days! Eh? Just so. Nothing to blush for—nothing to blush for, my dear sir," he continued, indulgently. "Now, sir," he said, resuming the austere tone, and holding his box on a level with the fourth button of Mr. Potter's vest—"now, sir, I can diagnose your case with ease: You rose this morning rather depressed—a little dull—low of spirits—in fact, slightly ill-humoured till you had broken your fast."

"Right to a T!" said Mr. Askew, slapping his knee.

"Yes—just so," said the stranger, smiling. "Then after meals you feel a sense of fulness and oppression, eh?"

"To be sure: heard him grumble about it scores of times," said Mr. Askew.

"Exactly," said the portly one, passing his box to Mr. Askew, who enjoyed a good pinch, and then to Mr. Potter, who did not know whether to be angry or amused, and hesitated; but as the box was still pressed towards him, he took a small portion, and then sneezed several times loudly.

"There'll be a row directly," muttered Mr. Askew, to himself, as he rubbed his hands softly together; and his eyes twinkled, as he glanced from one to the other.

"Yes," continued the stranger, austere, in quite magisterial tones—"precisely as I imagined; and another strong symptom is a certain hankering after stimulants towards evening."

"Wrong there—wrong there!" cried Mr. Potter, decisively.

"Ho, ho, ho! Oh, my, Potter! How can you?" cried Askew, holding his hands to his mouth, as if to check an ungovernable burst of laughter.

"Ah, ha! Trapped, my dear sir—trapped!" said the stranger, pleasantly. "But, there—there, we are all men of the world. A good glass of port, and a nightcap last thing—take them myself regularly. But, allow me. You should never have reservations from a medical man," and, before Mr. Potter was aware, two fat, white fingers were on his wrist, and his fellow-passenger's head had nodded satisfaction.

"We consider that we have a right behind the scenes, and, you'll excuse me, people rarely succeed in deceiving us."

"There'll be a row directly," chuckled Mr. Askew to himself, as he saw his friend's ominous brow. "It's coming on fast."

"I saw your case, sir, at a glance," continued the portly one. "To men of my profession, my dear sir, these matters are like A B C. Now, at the present moment, your eyes have a yellowish tinge, your lips are slightly fevered and cracked, and if you honoured me with a glance at your tongue, I should at once see that it was furred. I do not ask such a favour, but, being a humble follower of a science that I almost worship, I cannot refrain, go where I will, from—er—er—from er—"

"Talking shop," muttered Askew.

"Did you speak, sir?" said the portly one, drawing off a glove, and displaying a diamond ring, which he made to sparkle as he flicked a few grains of snuff from his shirt frill, and bent it aside to display the massive studs.

Mr. Askew did not speak.

"From—er—in fact, taking great interest in such cases as fall under my observation. You see, my dear sir, it is the liver which is in fault, and when we come to study that wondrous organ—its capacities—its duties—its formation—its—its—in fact, gentlemen," he exclaimed, waving the snuff-box, so that the diamond ring was turned towards the light, and ending with quite a burst, as if all the sugar was at the bottom of his speech—"in fact, sir, had you studied, you would exclaim what a wondrous thing is a liver!"

"With bacon," said Mr. Askew, in a low tone, as he watched for the anticipated outburst from his friend.

"You would be for mercury, no doubt, sir," said the stranger, severely; "but no, sir—no! Old world notions—exploded bubbles! Podophyllin, sir—podophyllin is the power; but you would say mercury."

"No, I shouldn't," growled Potter.

"I know there'll be an eruption directly," chuckled Mr. Askew.

"Well—well, we'll say not," said the stranger, smiling, as he tapped his gold box.

"Mercurial temperament!" put in Mr. Askew.

"Exactly," said the portly one, with a self-satisfied smile, that seemed to say, "You cannot tell me anything I don't know."

"We shall have it now," muttered Mr. Askew, softly rubbing his hands once more. And he was quite right, the storm was coming, but not from the anticipated quarter; for, turning suddenly upon the rosy little man, as he sat there with eyes twinkling with malicious glee, the portly stranger stared him hard in the face, frowned, raised a threatening finger and shook it, and then suddenly, and in admonitory tones, touched Mr. Askew in his tenderest point, by exclaiming—

"You are too stout, sir—much too stout!"

CHAPTER IX.—"BE OFF!"

A CHRONICLER should always speak the truth, even about the most trivial things; for, if you find a doubtful account of some little affair, you are

sure to shrug your shoulders at the most credible history of a large matter. Therefore, we frankly own that when Tom Barnard heard the trembling words of his gentle little burden, ending in "here's papa!" he certainly did feel very uncomfortable.



He was not exactly afraid, nor disposed to run away; but, to use his own words, addressed afterwards to himself in confidence, he "felt as if he could not help it."

No wonder: for just imagine that you yourself have gone, a stranger, into a town, and commenced practice in opposition to a highly respectable physician, M.D. Edinburgh; that you have called upon him; that he has, if not snubbed you, at all events shown you pretty plainly that he will have none of you; that he takes no notice of your bows in the street; that he is in the habit of speaking to people of you as a "jumped-up loblolly boy," "a hospital cad," &c., &c.; let him show in every way that he is horribly jealous of you, and detests you fervently; and then let him come upon you suddenly, carrying one of his daughters in your arms, as if with the full intent of bearing her off; and then see if you don't feel as uncomfortable as did Tom Barnard.

For a moment he was half disposed to set the little maiden down; but his good sense told him that such a proceeding would be like tacitly acknowledging that he was doing wrong, when he knew perfectly well that his had been precisely the conduct of a humane and chivalrous man—though he was bound to confess that, though he grieved for the little maiden's pain, he had most thoroughly enjoyed having her for a patient; in fact, he had come to the conclusion that, after all, Duxton was not such a very unbearable place; while to live there and attend the little body he was carrying—"What a fool I was to talk about going away!" he said to himself. "If I go after this, why, I'm a bigger noodle than I take myself to be." Then came little Mary's exclamation, and the coming of the doctor.

Tom Barnard acted like a man under the cir-

cumstances. He just whispered an encouraging word or two to his little patient, and then carried her boldly up to the astonished parent, who, in company with his two elder daughters, was crossing the field.

For a few moments the doctor seemed to be perfectly astounded, and stared from one to the other with his lips apart, but no sound to be heard.

But if Dr. Smallbois was speechless, so were not his daughters.

"Is that our Mary?" exclaimed Arabella, in a deep, tragic voice.

"Ma—hary, is that you?" exclaimed plump Grace.

"Your daughter has met with an accident, sir," said Tom Barnard, quietly, addressing the doctor, and paying no heed to the disgusted sisters. "I am happy to say that I encountered her in time to be of some—"

"Put her down, sir; how dare you!" exclaimed Dr. Smallbois, puffing his cheeks out, and thumping his gold-headed cane upon the grass.

"Certainly," said Tom Barnard, "but as a medical man, will you allow me to suggest—"

"No, sir, I won't!" roared the doctor. "Put her down, sir—put her down this instant; how dare you?"

"Papa," said a gentle little voice, "my ankle is much hurt, and Mr. Barnard—"

"Mary, I'm quite ashamed of you!" said Arabella.

"Mary, your boldness is dreadful!" cried Grace.

"Do you mean to put her down, sir, or are you going to take the slut off just as she is?" cried the doctor, furiously.

It was on Tom Barnard's lips to utter, "Poor little darling, there is nothing I should like to do better;" but he had the good sense merely to bow;



and, in obedience to a few words from the sufferer, he set her down, though he still supported her with one arm.

"Now, be off, sir—be off!" said the doctor, fiercely brandishing his cane. "I do not take upon

myself to thrash every beggarly impostor who comes near."

Mary cast an imploring look at Tom, and he re-

understanding! So much for visits to old Coulby! I thought there was something behind the scenes."

"You dare to come here, sir, into a respectable



"YOU ARE TOO STOUT, SIR."—(Page 21.)

mained silent, though he bit his lip to keep down his annoyance.

"Of course," sneered the sisters, "quite a good

town, and insult me with your pretensions, and call upon me, forsooth!"

"Dare?" said Tom, sternly.

But an imploring glance from Mary stayed him.

"And now you insult my daughter!"

"No, papa, indeed—indeed Mr. Barnard has been most kind," sobbed Mary.

"Hold your tongue, you forward hussy!" roared the doctor. "You shall keep to the house for this. Now, as for you," he continued, holding out his cane, and pointing towards the town—"be off!"

Tom Barnard was young and peppery, and in the few moments during which the doctor's speech lasted he felt first resentment and an itching of the fingers and toes, as if he would like to strike or kick; secondly, a strong sense of contempt for the self-inflated windbag of a man before him; and, thirdly, a disposition to laugh at the bombast and assertion joined to a theatrical attitude to which he was treated. A glance, though, at little Mary, and all was dissipated by a glow of something decidedly warm at his heart, and, like vapours before the sun, the enumerated sensations passed away, and he spoke out, in a quiet, gentlemanly manner—

"Indeed, Doctor Smallbois, you wrong me. I have endeavoured to behave with the greatest consideration to your daughter, though, finding her as I did, suffering from a severe sprain, I must own to having almost forced my attentions upon her."

"Of course," said Miss Smallbois.

"I wonder papa has patience to listen," said Grace.

Tom Barnard raised his eyebrows slightly, hardly comprehending this sudden change in the sisters, for at his last encounter cordial bows had been exchanged; but then he had not been seen with Sister Mary in his arms—that chit of a child—which, of course, made a great difference; but Tom never thought of that.

"Your conduct is most offensive, sir," said Dr. Smallbois, speaking in his deepest voice. "I will hear of no explanations! Go, sir—go!"

But still Tom did not move, for he was supporting little Mary, who now turned her pale and tearful face to him.

"I am very grateful to you, sir, for what you have done. And now, if you would please to let me go to papa."

Tom felt that he must go—that it was evident his longer stay would only be visited on the gentle little head so close to his shoulder; but at the same time he knew that the poor girl was in pain, and that it was absolute torture to her to set her foot to the ground, although she bore up bravely; and indignation somewhat got the better of him as, in reply to her words, he bowed his acknowledgments; and then, turning to the doctor—

"Sir," he said, "leaving all personal feeling out of the question, let me call your attention to your child's sufferings. Her ankle is badly sprained, she cannot stand alone, and a carriage ought to be at once sought to convey her. I will not further intrude. Perhaps, ladies, you will take her arms."

He turned towards Arabella and Grace now, who, with a lofty assumption of disdain, turned from him, while Mary tried to limp towards them; but Tom read in her quivering lips the pain she suffered, and

he only leaped forward in time to save her from falling heavily to the ground.

Tom could not help it. There are times when the heart will speak, uncontrolled; and it must have been one of these occasions now, as, catching her as she fell, he held her in his arms for a moment, gazing down in her eyes with a look that little Mary had never before encountered, as he whispered, softly—

"My poor little darling! I am grieved at this."

It was very dreadful, of course—very indecorous, for he had never spoken to her before that day; but Tom felt what he was saying, and his voice made another little heart to flutter strangely, as those words, unheard by other ears, sank deeply within it. Only a few hours before Tom was off post-haste—he had had enough of Duxton—and yet these words of his were words of truth; and could he have relieved the little maiden's pain by having his own ankles, both of them, violently sprained, he would have borne the infliction like a man. He would even have gone so far as to have his neck broken—Well, no, perhaps not quite so far as that, because a broken neck is such a decidedly incurable dislocation; but he meant all he said—much more, perhaps—though poor little Mary could not understand it all then, as she feebly tried to free herself from his sustaining arms.

It was a very painful position, and Tom felt it strongly. His words had not been caught by the bystanders; but they had heard a whisper, and the glance he stole at them showed how wrong an interpretation was placed upon his speech, for it was evident that a secret understanding was attributed to them.

"I don't know what to do," thought Tom. "Every moment I stay here will make it worse for the poor child; and yet it is sheer brutality to go and leave her."

"If you'd be kind enough to seat me on the grass, Mr. Barnard, please," said little Mary. "Thank you!"

She did not say any more aloud, but her little dove-like eyes said most plainly, "Do—do, please, go now!" And Tom Barnard felt that there was nothing else for him to do but raise his hat to the party and hurry off. He thought, though, that he would make one more conciliatory attempt.

"Doctor Smallbois," he said, raising his hat again, "will you allow me to call at your house, or at the inn, to order a conveyance to be sent to the lane?"

There was no reply. The doctor was still standing pompously erect, one gloved hand resting upon his hip, the other grasping the cane with which he pointed towards a part of the field where lay a great horse-pond, as if he expected the young man would immediately go there.

A glance at the young ladies showed them, too, erect and stilty, as became their father's daughters, hand joined in hand, eyes half-veiled, nostrils distended, and proud lips curled; and so Tom left them, walking away swiftly, and making use of rather warm language—language heated almost red-hot at times by the indignation burning within him.

He did not glance round once; but he had rather a fight with inclination till he was out of sight; while

that evening and the whole of the night were spent in thinking of Mary Smallbois, and conjuring up ideas, inspired by what he had seen, respecting the life the poor little thing must lead at home with such a parent and such sisters.

"He's a regular brute!" muttered Tom, indignantly, about four o'clock in the morning, as, rising on one elbow, he gave his pillow a tremendous punch, perhaps to relieve his feelings. "It would do him good to work half his practice away—not that I want to punish him. Then old fat Curtis is nearly as bad. I almost wonder they don't kill half the town between them—a pair of pig-headed, obstinate old fogies; but if they think I'm going—"

Tom did not finish his sentence, but lay sleepless till eight o'clock, when he rose, went down to his surgery, and burned a couple of advertisements addressed severally, "To Medical Practitioners," and "To parties in search of a country opening," which he had intended to despatch to the *Lancet* and *Medical Times*, after which he ate a very hearty breakfast, moistened the palms of his hands as if about to commence some arduous task, rubbed the said hands together, walked up and down his garden for half-an-hour, thinking how he should like to go and bathe and bandage the poor little suffering ankle; and then, with his mind made up to stop at Duxton for good, he sat down to study, just as the station fly containing his great rival passed his window.

"All right, old chap," said Tom; "you sha'n't find me anything disagreeable. You are *her* father, and that's enough for me," and then he thrust his hands into his hair, as if about to tear it out by the roots, leant his elbows on the table and read—read furiously till evening, when he partook of a double meal, tea and dinner together, told himself he had worked up "Tomkins on the Ankle-joint" thoroughly, sighed, and then, so as to be sociable with the town's-folk, he walked off towards the County Arms for a game at billiards, a cigar, and a glass of whisky toddy.

CHAPTER X.—PERSONALITIES.

AT the sudden and unlooked-for attack upon his personal appearance, all the humour in Mr. Askew's countenance disappeared, as if by magic. It must have flashed out of his eyes, for they quite sparkled as for some moments he sat staring in dumb amazement at the stranger's daring effrontery.

"Yes, sir," said the portly one, too much wrapped up in his garb of self-complacency to heed the look as he gave the barbed shaft another tap—"you are too stout, sir—stout, sir—stout!"

"Ever so much, aint he?" cried Mr. Potter, chuckling so at this change that the tears stood in his eyes.

Mr. Askew swelled with indignation till he looked quite a stone heavier, and he still sat staring at the author of the insult—a man far more gross and heavy than himself.

"Yes, sir, too stout," continued the stranger, evidently liking to hear the sound of his own rich, oily voice. "You think not, sir—I see it in your looks. But I beg to differ. Think of the feelings of your friends, sir, if you should be suddenly carried off.

You are verging upon apoplexy, sir, and I would not give *that* for your life."

Here the stranger snapped his finger and thumb, so as to get rid of a few particles of adhering snuff, while Mr. Potter absolutely rumbled with suppressed laughter.

"I always told him so," cried Mr. Potter, as soon as he could speak.

"Why, you——" Mr. Askew could get no farther, being absolutely choked with fury.

"Don't excite yourself, sir, pray: it is not safe in a man of your habit. We are all of us given to slight the advice of our friends, but in your case, sir, I should proceed at once to reduction—cold-bathing, douches, and violent exertion—riding, leaping, running, dumb-bells."

"Pooh! Too short-winded, and too—too—too—too fat!" chuckled Mr. Potter.

"Strict attention to diet and hygiene," continued the self-constituted adviser. "I should adopt a prophylactic treatment. You see, the human fat consists of oleine and stearine; the oleine preponderates in you, sir, and yours is an oily fat. If you proceed in your present career unchecked, you will suffer from a variety of the ills affecting the stout, or from pathogenetic symptoms. Why, even now, sir, I can perceive in you the shadowing forth, the dawning—if I may be allowed the expression—of an erysipelatous redness of countenance."

There is said to be an end to all things, and the lava of Mr. Askew's wrath had long been bubbling furiously, and struggling for an exit. The eruption at last took place.

"I should advise——" said the stranger, taking snuff. "Confound it all, sir!" gasped the angry little man, with his eyes rolling, "what the deuce do you mean, sir? How can you have the—the confounded—the—the consummate impudence, sir; the insolence, sir; the—the impertinence, sir; the face—the—the—er—the—the——"

"Cheek!" suggested Mr. Potter.

"Yes, sir; cheek, sir—cheek," spluttered Mr. Askew, "to address me in that way?"

"There—there—there," said the stranger, smiling blandly, and referring again to his snuff-box, "compose yourself, my dear sir. All proofs of my diagnosis," he whispered across to Mr. Potter.

"I—I—I never was so insulted before in a public vehicle," stuttered Mr. Askew.

"Never saw a more strongly marked case," whispered the stranger again to Mr. Potter. "Pray, mark the tinge in his complexion."

"There, hang it all, my good sir," cried Mr. Potter, "don't come quacking over me again."

"Sir!" said the stranger, drawing himself up, but still speaking urbanely, "may I ask you to repeat that expression?"

"I said quacking, sir—quacking," said Mr. Potter, very gruffly.

"Sir," said the stranger, with dignity, "I fear that I have been mistaken in the character of my travelling companions. I thought you both to be the victims of misadventure in the refreshment-room."

"What do you mean?" roared the friends in chorus.

"Hear me out, sirs," said the stranger, buttoning

up his coat, and feeling whether his gold snuff-box was safe. "If there is a word that I never allow any one to utter in my presence—a word that is contemptible and insulting to a gentleman of my profession, it is the one you used."

"What do you mean—quack?" cried Mr. Potter, fiercely.

"Dux—Dux—Duxton : change here for Perram—never—err—shersham or boo!" cried a porter, shouting out a perfectly unintelligible sentence, which seemed knotty and to end in a knob; for, unperceived by the excited occupants of the carriage, the train had stopped.

The stranger hurriedly took his umbrella, Bradshaw, and newspaper, off the seat, threw a wrapper over his arm, and, darting a look at his fellow-travellers, left them to point out their luggage to the porter, and reach the station door in time to see the only fly in waiting being driven off—the gentleman of the unctuous voice having secured it for his own use.

"How long will it be before that fly comes back, porter?" said Mr. Askew, with a little bubble of wrath now and then breaking from his lips in the shape of an involuntary splutter.

"Won't come back to-night, sir. Meets fust train in the morning."

"How far is it to the hotel?" growled Mr. Potter.

"On'y crosst the road, sir. Tickets, sir. Thanky, sir. That's the hotel, sir." And the porter pointed to a new, showy-looking public-house, very painty, damp, and warpy, over whose garish gas-lamp was displayed, in gilt letters upon a blue ground, "The Railway Hotel."

"There, that'll do. Cold wind always on draught," muttered Mr. Askew. "Here, you sir, where's Richmond Villa?"

"Two mile t'other side the town, sir; on the old London road—Muster Jones's."

"Where can we get a fly?" said Mr. Potter.

"County Arms, sir; market-place, sir. On'y 'bout mile and a half, sir."

"You've done it now, haven't you?" growled Mr. Potter; "bringing one down here in the wet and cold. If I'd known—"

"There, all right, old fellow!" cried Mr. Askew, forgetting his wrath in his desire to make matters straight with his friend. Then he gave a glance at the Railway Hotel, and mentally compared it with the snug old inns of the coaching days, shook his head, thrust his arm through Mr. Potter's, but only to withdraw it the next moment. "Volunteers on the march," he said. "Tuck up your overalls, my boy. Here, you porter, we'll send on for our luggage."

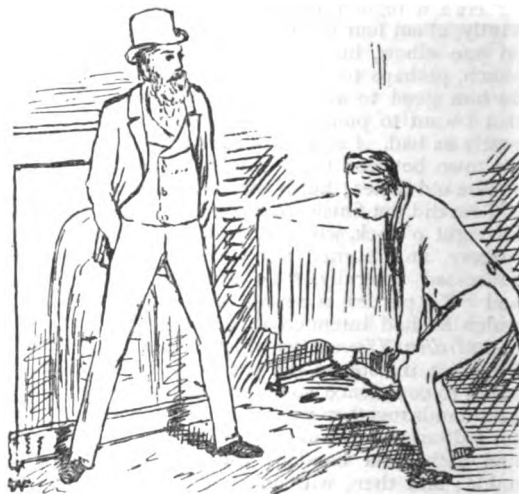
"Right, sir!" said the man. And the next moment the travellers plunged into the darkness ahead, in search of the County Arms.

CHAPTER XI.—A RE-ENCOUNTER.

NOW as to a man falling in love at first sight, the individual who would do so must certainly be excessively soft in someone or other of his organisms—to avoid vulgarity, we'll say in his heart—and such a being ought never to be allowed to visit Madame Tussaud's exhibition, nor yet be permitted

to gaze in those *coiffeurs'* windows where the last new monstrosity in ladies' head-gear is exhibited upon a lovely pink and white dummy.

And yet Tom Barnard, as he walked towards the County Arms—going the longest way round, so



that he might pass the ugly, red brick mansion of Dr. Smallbois—was really and truly desperately in love. His was not love at first sight though, for he had previously seen the little devotional face bent down in the family pew, and besides, he had spoken to her; and lastly, had he not found her suffering, and received grateful glances from a pair of speaking, timid, soft eyes, as he worked hard to alleviate that suffering? A very dangerous state of affairs. Old married doctors, of course, grow callous, and look upon every patient of the gentler sex as so much fibre, tissue, bone, and muscle, nerve, vein, and artery, to be treated medicinally or surgically; but young practitioners must stand a chance of sooner or later popping the question to some fair patient when pressing a couple of forefingers upon a blue-veined throbbing pulse. It seems only natural, and if it is done later instead of sooner, it must be from want of practice, and through not being brought into connection with patients young and fair enough to enlist sympathetic feelings.

Yes, Tom Barnard was decidedly in love; and he would gladly have learned how poor little Mary was, but that was impossible. So he, not having arrived at the sickly, mawkish state which makes young men refuse food, sigh, and neglect their personal appearance, strolled to the County Arms, walked up into the billiard-room, to find the gas turned nearly out, and the green table unemployed; so he walked down again, ordered a glass of toddy, and strolled into one of the cheerful private rooms, lit a cigar, and began to read the *Times*, to hear the next minute, loudly pronounced, the words—

"Halt! Dis-miss!"

"Hallo—some of our fellows," muttered Tom, lowering the newspaper. "No," he said, directly after, as heard the following—

"This way, sir. Not that room, sir; that's the kmershal. Good fire in here, sir; and we'll have the fly ready dreckly, sir."

"And our luggage?"

"Luggage, sir?"

"Yes; luggage at the station."

"Send a truck for it dreckly, sir," and Charles—otherwise "Chawls," or "Chowls"—ushered Messrs. Potter and Askew into the room where Tom Barnard was skimming his paper.

Then he gave the fire a waiter's poke, turned the gas a shade higher, and re-arranged a fork upon the table laid for dinner.

The firelight was dancing amongst the glass upon the sideboard, and made the squinting eyes of a very stuffy, stuffed fox twinkle and look roguish. Everything was in strong contrast to the Railway Hotel, and the cold and mist without, for the curtains were drawn, and the fire seemed to ask the visitors not to let its warmth be wasted.

Mr. Potter glanced at the newspaper reader, and nodded in reply to Tom Barnard's "Cold evening, gentlemen," took two strides across the room, and, without removing his hat, began to warm his back, in which he was ably supported by Mr. Askew, who also favoured the young surgeon with a nod.

The next minute Charles the waiter returned, just as Mr. Potter gave an audible sniff, he having at that moment breathed the fumes of Tom Barnard's steaming glass, while Mr. Askew was engaged in removing the cruet-stoppers, and smelling the bottles, to see what sauces they contained, and at that moment he had John Bull to one nostril, the stopper to the other.

Charles' mission was to see if an order was forthcoming; but there was complete silence till Tom Barnard spoke.

"Didn't I hear volunteers in the entry, Charles?"

"Hem!" said Charles, behind his hand. "Yes, sir."

"Some of our fellows, or the Light Horse?"

"Hem!" said Charles, again glancing at the newcomers. "No, sir."

When Mr. Askew glanced at Mr. Potter, and winked.

"Sent for the luggage, gentlemen," said Charles. Then, hastily, for fear Tom should ask further questions, "Fly round dreckly, sir."

"How long?" growled Mr. Potter.

"Not ten minutes, sir."

"Humph!" ejaculated Mr. Potter.

The waiter peeped first on one side of Mr. Potter and then on the other, and then between his Colossus of Rhodes' legs, to see if the fire was flourishing. He then tried hard to get at the poker, but it was so defended by the guest's huge person, that he gave it up, and cast an eye upon the curtains, drawing them a little closer, and making a pleasant tinkling with the brass rings, when, still finding no orders forthcoming from his speechless visitors, he was about to essay a few words himself, when Mr. Potter growled—

"Waiter, have you got a doctor in this town—a stout, fat-faced fellow?"

"Yes, sir—Doctor Curtis, sir, in the avenue. Fly to go there, sir?"

"No!" shouted Mr. Potter, in a voice of thunder. And, like the *Times* reader, Charles glanced wonderingly at the fresh arrival.

"Like to take anything, sir?" said Charles, at last, timidly, to Mr. Askew. "Nice bit of quite fresh cod, best cut, hyster sauce, sir; roast fowls just ready. Gent was going to dine here, sir, but sent a message by dillygraph to say as he isn't coming. Thought you was him, sir, at fust."

"H'm!" said Mr. Askew, softly, as he replaced the cruet, and thought of the molten glue at the refreshment-room.

The waiter coughed, and held his head on one side as if ready to peck up the order, having a very birdish, beaky look about him, like a puffin; for he was a short, stiff little fellow, with a triangular nose, which, as he waited, he now began absently to wipe upon the napkin he carried, till recollecting himself, he finished upon the orthodox pocket-handkerchief.

"Did you say cod, waiter?" said Mr. Askew, abstractedly putting his hands in his pockets and jingling some loose coin as he rose and fell upon his heels and toes.

"Yessir, fust-class bit, sir—fine sounds," said Charles, again nearly making a mistake with the napkin.

"And oysters?" said Mr. Askew, softly.

"Yessir, little beauties, sir—real natives, sir; never see smaller and fatter hysters in my life."

"Roast fowls to follow," said Mr. Askew, musingly, taking his hands out of his pockets and trying the edge of the carver.

"Own fattening, sir," said Charles: "white Dorkings, sir, tender as tender. Capital Stilton in cut, sir, and salary."

"H'm!" said Mr. Askew again, while Charles



changed feet, glanced towards the door, and wished those fowls were on the spit again, and that the guests could smell them. "Half-past seven," continued Mr. Askew, looking at his watch. "Past eight before we could get there."

"Richmon' Villa, sir?—yessir, all that, I should say, sir."

"Too late for dinner—everything cold and confusion. Tea and thin bread-and-butter, perhaps," muttered Mr. Askew. Then, aloud—"Getting very late, Potter—what do you think? Cod, oysters, fowls—"

"And Stilton, sir," said Charles.

"And Stilton," said Mr. Askew. "What do you say?"

"Ready to faint," growled Potter.

Charles rubbed his hands softly, and smiled; then glanced at Mr. Askew, who galvanized him into activity with a nod; then he raised one gas-burner a trifle, blew a fragment of paper-ash from one of the globes, flicked the said fragment off the white table-cloth with his pocket-handkerchief, between which useful appendage and his napkin he always seemed in doubt as to proper usage; placed the carvers a trifle more straight, and then glided out of the room to give his orders,—first in the kitchen, where the half-cold fowls were soon once more turning and browning. He then glided, like a conspirator, into the bar, and from behind his hand begged earnestly that Jacob might be sent from the yard to intercept the returning fly, and to order the driver to come in the back way.

"And, if I were master here," said Charles, with a tender glance at the plump landlady, "I should have fires lit in number six and number eight."

"Would you, though, Charles?" said his mistress.

"Yes, I would," said Charles, still whispering, for he considered that there was something confidential in a whisper, and he had his own reasons for wishing to be on confidential terms with his mistress. "Suppose they don't stop all night, what then? It's only a scuttle of coals, and you get that back in the airing."

The landlady nodded, smiled, and then asked Charles if he would take anything.

"Lord love you, no, mum, not now. There goes the bell. It took some doing to get 'em to stay; and if you would do what you could to hurry 'em in the kitchen, it would be worth anything. Mind as the hyster sauce is right! Ah," he muttered, as he went off, "what money might be made in this place if one only had in it a real int'rest."

As Charles left the room, Tom Barnard extended the *Times* towards the visitors.

"To-day's news, gentlemen," he said.

"Thanks, not now," said Mr. Askew, pleasantly, while Mr. Potter gave him a solemn and dignified shake.

Tom bowed, smiled, and finished his whisky, when he rose to go—a movement no sooner observed by Mr. Askew than he looked hard at Potter.

"My dear sir," he said, the next moment, "we are driving you away."

"Not at all," said Tom, smiling; "but before I go I will ask one question?"

"Question?—yes," said Mr. Askew, staring hard. "But have we not met before?"

"Exactly. I am glad you recognize me."

"Of course it is," said Mr. Potter. "Thought I

knew your voice. Odd we should meet again down here. Glad to see you, though."

"Same here," said Mr. Askew, seizing one hand and shaking it heartily, while Mr. Potter shook the other.

"Oh," said Mr. Askew, "but, I say, though—if I am not mistaken—you are a member of the great national institution—a volunteer, are you not?"

"A very unworthy one," said Tom, smiling.

"So we all say," laughed Askew. "Potter, my boy, we must fraternize. Our friend will, no doubt, join our humble repast."

"Glad of his company, I'm sure," said Potter, heavily.

"Thanks, no," said Tom, smiling, "I have only just dined."

"Never mind," said Askew, who was rather taken with the young surgeon's appearance. "What's a meal more or less? Join us, my dear sir—join us. Take pity on a couple of castaways."

"Well," said Tom, laughing, "if you can bear my presence, I won't say no to a glass of wine, for really it is dull down here."

At this moment Charles entered the room, in response to Mr. Potter's ring.

"What wine have you, waiter?"

"Best glass in the county, sir. Hunt ball and dinner held here, sir, and we keep a special class o' wine a purpose. Hunting gents is mostly judges of what a wine should be. Sherry, sir? Yes, sir—and port?"

Mr. Potter nodded.

"What sort of a wine would you like, sir? We've a fruity port, sir, and an old crusted, fifteen years in bottle, as we calls the 'County Pertickler.' They're both thought a deal on, sir!"

"Bring both," said Mr. Potter.

"Cert'nly, sir. Hunt sherry, sir?"

"Yes," grunted Mr. Potter; "brown, mind: none of your pale potahto spirit and water."

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.

And Manchester and Liverpool.

The Spider of Duxton.

BEING THE ADVENTURES OF THREE BELLES,
THREE BEAUX, AND A MARRIED COUPLE.

CHAPTER XII.—MARRIED *v.* SINGLE.

CHARLES glided away, to gladden the heart of his mistress with the wine order, though it might have been for poison to be secretly administered, so solemn was his whis-

per from behind his hand.

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Askew, a short time after, "Charles, thou art a true prophet. Fine cod, firm, flaky, and creamy. Sounds, Private Barnard?"

"Thanks, no."

"Sounds, Private P.?"

"No!" said Mr. Potter, in a deep growl.

"Ah, you never did have any taste," said Mr. Askew, transferring a double allowance to his own plate.

Mr. Potter muttered thunder, as, tasteless or no, he helped himself to a liberal supply of the savoury bivalves in the sauce.

"Glasses of sherry round, Charles," said Mr. Askew. And taking hold of the decanter neck with his napkin, Charles carefully filled the glasses with the topaz fluid, as if it were liquid gold, replaced the unshaken decanter, and then stood waiting further orders, with a countenance that would have made innocence look like an impostor.

The gentlemen tasted, and set down their glasses.

"Did you ever!" exclaimed Potter and Askew together; when the former indignantly began—"Now, look here, my friend, if you have no decent sherry, say so, and bring me a jug of toast and water. When I drink wine, I like it to be wine; and when I drink spirits, I like them to be good, and to mix them myself. Now, while they are dishing up those fowls, just see if a mistake has not been made. Take away the port, too—perhaps that's wrong as well."

Mr. Potter's long speech was not without effect, for wine was brought which was declared to be excellent; and over a fair dinner the existence of the flyman was entirely forgotten.

At about half-past nine Charles brought in coffee, to find the gentlemen deep in a discussion upon the volunteer movement. He would have suggested slippers, but he felt that the hour was not yet come, even though the fly had long been locked up in the coach-house, and the driver had gone home to hide in the bosom of his family.

"Not if I know it, to-night," said Mr. Potter, in answer to a hint respecting Richmond Villa. "Charles, three whiskeys with lemon."

"Three whiskeys with lemon, mum, very best, hot and strong," said Charles. "They're sure, mum, and they're all three joining hands over the card-table, and swearin' brotherhood; and the little fat chap wants to sing 'Lang Syne,' only he can't recollect the words. Treat 'em well, mum, and who knows but what they may stop a week?"

It was past twelve that night when Tom Barnard went home, laughing about his new acquaintances; and for another few hours the repose of Richmond Villa remained undisturbed.

Mr. Jones had finished his breakfast some time, and, clad in his gardening coat, he was giving instructions to the jobbing man, who was re-laying the turf for croquet reasons. Mr. Jones was looking very fierce and dictatorial, and had just told the man that he did not understand his trade, when the sound of wheels stopping at his gate made him raise his head.

Alas for the brevity of human greatness! The grandeur in Mr. Jones's aspect vanished in an instant, as he realized the fact that the County Arms fly was at the end of the path, that his two bachelor friends were there, and that they had brought with them luggage as if they meant to stay for months. And that was not the worst of it, for he could plainly recall one or two instances when he had pressed them warmly to come!

And here they were! They had come to stay!

Certainly, to some people it would not have been so very serious a matter; for had not Mr. Potter, in consequence of Doctor Smallbois' absence with a patient, acted as papa upon a certain interesting occasion? But, then, matters had not turned out as Mr. Jones had expected; he and Mrs. Jones were not one, but two, upon a great many points. Hence, then, the strange leavening in his countenance, as he waved his hand towards the occupants of the fly—a leavening that made its appearance as a ghastly grin, which faded again as he glanced round at the drawing-room window to see if Mrs. Jones was looking.

Not that the owner of Richmond Villa had much cause to blush for his friends, since they were staid, stoutish gentlemen, of good repute, well dressed, well luggaged, and, above all, they came in a fly, about which vehicle, if there is not the gentility of a brougham, there is a respectability that appertaineth not to a cab. It was not as if they had been wild-looking, roystering blades, whose clothes were of the cheapest and fastest cut—new, shabby-looking garments, that slrink and crease, and have a horrible gloss.

Mr. Jones had turned to see if his lady was looking, and apparently she was not; but all the same, Mrs. Jones had seen all as she sat there with her

sisters, who had arrived on the previous day, to make happy the life of Jones.

"There, darlings," Mrs. Jones had exclaimed, "there are a couple of princes come to bear you off. Why, who can they be? Why, if they are not J.'s friends, who were at the wedding!"

Arabella almost said "How nice"—but did not quite; and then, setting aside the discussion concerning Mary's ankle, and the impertinence of that medical student, the timid maidens shrank away from the window, and Mrs. Jones bent down over her embroidery; but, all the same, one of "those wicked eyes," as Jones once called them, was directed towards and saw all that passed at the gate.

"Not married yet, old boy," said Mr. Askew. "Came down last night, but would not disturb you."

"Jolly bachelors still," said Mr. Potter, ponderously.

"Ha-ha-ha!—he-he-he!" laughed Mr. Jones. "Just so; very glad to see you! Nice morning, aint it? But come in."

Oh, for the feebleness of that invitation! though, as Mr. Jones led the way into the hall, he nerved himself into a state of desperation, and determined to assume a virtue he did not possess, as he made up his mind that he would cow Mrs. Jones for once, and not let his old friends see, now they had come, to what a depth he had fallen.

But Mr. Jones found, apparently, that he had been loading an Armstrong gun wherewith to blow down a card-house, for upon entering the drawing-room, and going through the ceremony of introduction, he found himself in a presence wreathed with smiles.

"You'll take glasses of sherry and a biscuit, of course," said Jones, sternly.

"Oh, of course," said Mrs. Jones, smiling, as she jingled a bunch of keys in her basket, and then rang for decanter and glasses.

"However am I to put them off and get rid of them?" groaned Jones, mentally. "They've come to stop; they've brought luggage, and we're full!"

"We're quite taking you by storm, my dear Mrs. Jones," said Askew. "I've been telling J. that we should have been here last night, only Potter discovered some prey at the inn, and would not leave it, growling violently at every hint at a move."

Mr. Potter darted an indignant glance at his friend, but did not speak.

"She'll have hysterics again," thought Mr. Jones, "as soon as she knows they mean to stay."

If he could only have beaten a retreat he would have done so; for though he had come in determined to assert himself, he found that he really could not do it so well in Mrs. Jones's presence; and while his old friends chatted about the weather and made themselves agreeable, he found that he could do hardly anything but gasp.

Jane, the maiden, entered, received her orders, and soon returned with glasses and a decanter of sherry, that made both friends set their teeth very firmly, and take it as if it were medicine; but now Jane hung about the door.

"It's coming now," thought Mr. Jones; and he mentally determined that, if his wife did have a

seizure, he would lock the door and keep out Mrs. Scaldar.

"Well, Jane?" said Mr. Jones, condescendingly. Jane, house and parlourmaid, gave a sign that she wished to speak with her mistress in private.

"Speak out, Jane," said Mrs. Jones, grandly, as if there was nothing at Richmond Villa to need concealment.

"Brandy's in the cellaret—salts on dining-room chimney-piece," thought Mr. Jones, watching his lady fixedly.

"If you please, 'm—" said Jane.

"Yes, Jane? Go on," said her mistress, encouragingly.

"If you please, 'm, cook says there ain't enough taters for dinner; and the flyman wants to know how much longer he's to wait, and who's to help him in with the luggage?"

CHAPTER XIII.—MR. POTTER'S TOILET.

"THEY say you ought to show yourself about if you want to be popular," said Tom Barnard.

And he made that his excuse for constantly running in and out, for he was excessively restless, and felt that he would have given anything to know how poor little Mary was.

He walked to the County Arms, thereby causing a kind remark from one of the sour old maids of the place, who thought it a great pity that so young a man should take to drinking, but supposed it was because no one called him in.

Charles was in the porch, hatless, and looking out for visitors.

"Don't like questioning servants," said Tom, "but all's fair in love and war, and I want to know what those chaps have come down for. If that tall, stout fellow means miss—chief," he added, in correction, "he'd better not call me in."

Tom fiddled a small lancet about that he carried in his pocket, and then he laughed, and called himself a fool.

"Well, Charles, coughing again," he said. "That's a nasty dry cough. Let me make you up a little medicine."

"Well, sir—hem!—you see, sir."

"There, there, man, I don't mean a bill. I'll send you a bottle."

"Thanky, sir," said Charles. And just then the luggage-laden fly came in sight. "Your friends a-coming back, sir."

"Indeed!" said Tom Barnard. "Just in time, then. Been down to the Jones's, eh?"

"Yes, sir. I could ha' told 'em it would be no use, because the Smallbois gals was stopping there, only I didn't like to. Two on 'em. Our fly took 'em and their things, because the doctor's brougham was busy. Got some one to pison, sir."

Here Charles winked his eye very solemnly at the young surgeon, just as the fly drew up empty; when Charles, without further orders, called for the boots to replace the luggage in the gentlemen's rooms, and Tom Barnard slowly walked off, strolling, of course by accident, towards the Jones's, to meet the companions of the past evening about an hour afterwards, in company with Mr. Jones, who looked so elate, that it was evident hysterics had not reigned

at Richmond Villa—Mrs. Jones, for reasons of her own, having refrained from any unpleasant demonstration, and welcomed her husband's guests most cordially.

"What ho! there, well met," cried Mr. Askew, as Tom came up. "My friend Jones—my friend Tom Barnard: embrace! Well, no, don't; shake hands instead."

"Most happy to have the pleasure," said Jones.

"Delighted, I'm sure," said Tom Barnard.

As for Mr. Jones, he was in the best of spirits; and, to Charles's great delight, the gentlemen came back to the hotel, had a very hearty lunch, and then played billiards till four, when Jones took his departure.

"Gives me great pleasure to have made your acquaintance, Mr. Barnard," he said. "You must look over our not calling upon you—relative doctor—see?"

"I see—I see," said Tom, laughing.

"But, look here," said Jones, "half-past six to-night, sharp, come and dine with us; my friends here will give you a lift in their fly."

"Well, really," said Tom, hesitating, "I couldn't think—"

"Not another word," said Jones. "It's all right; Mrs. Jones will be delighted."

"Charming woman, sir," said Potter.

"But," said Tom, as he recalled the sprain scene, "I'm afraid that Doctor Smallbois is rather affronted."

"Doctor Smallbois be blowed, sir," said Jones, rather thickly, for the billiards had made him thirsty; "he's an old—"

"There—there, never mind that, Joney," said Askew. "Look here, Barnard, old fellow, that don't matter a bit. I'll answer for Mrs. Jones giving you a jolly reception."

"Well," thought Tom, "I'll risk the sisters, then, and try if I can't smooth them down. See how the wind lies, perhaps. Well, thanks," he said, aloud; "I shall be most happy."

"Right," said Jones. "Proud to have made your acquaintance—half-past six, sharp."

Mr. Jones strode away perpendicular, as if fresh from drill, to have an hour's walk before he ventured home, never once thinking of his daring act in asking Tom Barnard, while that gentleman went home to arrange about his toilet for the evening.

"What did I say, mum?" said Charles, confidentially, that evening to the landlady. "You see," he continued in a whisper, though there was no one near, "if you hadn't treated 'um well, they'd ha' gone full roosh back to town, while now they'll keep on backwards and forwards, dining here and there, and if they don't look out the spider 'll net 'em. But p'raps you'll alter the slate to quarter past six 'stead of six—last orders. Dine at the villa, you know."

"Not much good that," said the landlady.

"Don't you be in a hurry, mum. You'll be having bachelor dinners, and all sorts o' games going on—you see if there ain't. Here's Muster Jones coming out with his sherry here to-day, and they're old friends of the new doctor. It's all right, mum, they're the right sort—plenty o' money; and what with

sperrits and billiards, and lunches and brexfasses, they'll make it right—see if they don't. Better than k'mershals, anyhow. Just look what we've got; two Manchesters and a Brummygem now, and what are they worth to the house?"

"Gent in number six wants a pair of candles, 'm," said the chambermaid, cutting short the conversation, and looking very sinisterly at Charles.

"I took a pair there myself, Emily," said the landlady.

"Yes, 'm," said the chambermaid; "but the tall gent says he wants a better light to do his hair."

The hostess screwed up her lips as she thought about the Misses Smallbois, and then glanced at waiter Charles, when both smiled; and it became almost a wonder that Mr. Potter obtained more than the wicks of the candles, for the chambermaid's eyes blazed in a way that must have made them run had the glance rested upon them for an instant. "And her old enough to be his mother," she muttered, fiercely.

From this demand for candles, it will be seen that Mr. Potter was somewhat particular over his personal appearance. Fortunately, under the pretence of writing a letter, he had gone up about three-quarters of an hour before his friend, when, stooping down to open the portmanteau newly returned per fly, he had some little difficulty in getting in the key; and then, after a great deal of twisting and straining, and much more difficulty in getting it out, twisted and partly broken, he made the discovery that the portmanteaus had been changed, he having Mr. Askew's in his room.

"Hope I haven't hurt the lock," muttered Mr. Potter, as he rang, and had the mistake rectified.

Five minutes after he was fumbling with his half-broken key, which obstinately refused to enter the lock wards till a portion was snapped off, when, to Mr. Potter's great vexation, it turned round and round as many times as he pleased, but without opening the portmanteau.

"He'll get himself right in time, I hope," said the chambermaid, angrily, as the bell of number six pealed again.

"Send for a locksmith directly. Tell him to bring his tools to pick a lock."

Then Mr. Potter looked anxiously at his watch, and waited till, for some reason best known to himself, Mr. Weiss, the town whitesmith, came on without his tools, when, after a great deal of unnecessary shoe-rubbing, to display his attention and humility, he was led into the presence of the fuming Potter.

Then came a long examination—upside down, downside up, right and left, during which the toilet service rattled as the portmanteau was bumped about, and turned over and over. The broken key was turned solemnly round and round, the orifice nearly filled with candle grease dropped from the inclined light, and then Mr. Weiss spoke as if he had made a most important discovery—

"It'll have to be picked, sir."

And then, in the most provokingly cool way, departed to fetch his tools.

He returned at length, as coolly as he had departed, to find Mr. Potter, watch in hand, considering whether he had not better cut the leather away

from the lock. He did not speak, though, only glared at Mr. Weiss, who was one of those men whom to hurry is to hinder. He could not even be prevailed upon to enter the bedroom without a vast amount of shoe-rubbing again. His hat was set



down outside the door, a red cotton handkerchief placed within it, and then the locksmith fumbled the portmanteau about, and jingled the tools in his basket, fumbled again, grew very moist and shiny, and then rose to say it was a very difficult task, and that he'd have to fetch another pick.

Probably Mr. Weiss did not see Mr. Potter's look, or he would not have returned for fear of being pitched out of the window. He came back at last; the shoe-rubbing and careful setting down of the hat followed; there was more bumping about of the portmanteau and fumbling with tools; the candle was set first on one chair and then on another, and at last, when Mr. Potter's patience was quite worn out, Mr. Weiss arose.

"I thought I should, sir."

"Should what?" growled Mr. Potter.

"Have to take un to the shop, sir."

This was too much for Mr. Potter, who pulled out his knife, and in another moment would have plunged it into the leather, when Mr. Weiss said "he'd be blessed if he wouldn't have one more try, anyhow," and kneeling down and thrusting vigorously, "snap" went the lock, and Mr. Potter's wardrobe was at liberty.

Then came the unpacking, and more trouble for Mr. Potter. The new dress coat had been so badly folded, that it wore a peculiar creased appearance, as if it had been pinned up tightly in a cotton handkerchief, and deposited with Uncle Lombard.

The coat was hung to the fire, and the new spring velvet vest taken out. Worse and worse; in the hurried packing, a bottle of Crystalline Cream—otherwise pomatum—had been placed in the same compartment, and the stopper having been shaken out by the efforts of Mr. Weiss, one pocket of the vest was half full of the oleaginous compound.

But Mr. Potter was strong in waistcoats; he had others that would do; and he now set vigorously to

work to complete his task. As a matter of course, being pressed for time, everything went wrong. There was a button off his shirt, in the very worst place—the neck. Certainly he might have put on another, but he had just got his studs properly fixed, so he tried pins, which would not go through the stiff, starchy linen till his fingers were quite sore. Then, even with extra candles, his hair would not yield. He wished to bisect his head with a line drawn from the nape of his neck to his nose; and when, after numberless trials, he had hit the correct line, a knock at the door so startled him with its suddenness, that the comb slipped, and the work was undone. However, he persevered till another loud knock disturbed him.

"Who's there?"

"Mr. Haskew's compliments, sir, and would Mr. Potter like a vally?"

"Down directly!"

Another interval, and then another knock, just as Mr. Potter was perspiring in his efforts to draw on a pair of light, patent leather dress-boots, a full size too small. It was a troublesome task, for the boots would not go on, nor yet come off; for whenever the luckless owner tried to get his feet at liberty, so as to soap the heel of his stocking, the white leather lining dragged up, and formed itself into a great "ruck" in the leg of the boot.

"Coming, I tell you," roared Mr. Potter, in exasperated tones.

"Mr. Haskew said, sir, as him and Mr. Barnard was tired of waiting, and should he order some dinner here?"

"I can't get my boots on, Charles," said Mr. Potter, despairingly.

And he walked to the door with his feet stuck in the legs of his Wellingtons, and the loose portions flapping on the carpet.

"Won't they go on, sir?" said Charles, turning his head on one side to gaze at the offending boots.

"No," said Mr. Potter, hoping for help. "I've been dragging at them for a quarter of an hour."

"Then I should pull 'em off, sir," said Charles, sagely.

"But, hang it, man, they won't be pulled off."

"Then why don't you ease 'em a bit with a ray-shor, sir?"

The idea was acted upon, just as Mr. Askew's voice was heard to shout up the stairs—

"Going without you."

"Coming, I tell you!" roared Mr. Potter, in an exasperated tone, that made Mr. Askew, in simulated dread, set up his back and return on tip-toe to the private room.

But the boots were now on—somewhat disfigured, certainly, and showing in front white oblong patches of stocking whenever the black trousers receded a little; but, upon Charles being taken into counsel, it was decided that it would pass unnoticed. The vest was taken in a hole or two, the creased coat put on, and, after Charles had given the excited gentleman a brush before and a brush behind, and one on either side, during which he turned slowly round before him as if being roasted, he rushed down the stairs in no very amiable frame of mind, though all the same, lest his friends should have

gone, in a state of trepidation, visible even in the way in which his cravat was tied; while a long, white string, that had escaped the notice of Charles, streamed out like a tiny pennon from the nape of his neck, until tucked out of sight by Mr. Askew.

"I'm like a parent to you, Potter," he said, as they took their places. "Tut—tut—tut! half-past six."

"There, drive on—Richmond Villa!" cried Mr. Potter, savagely; when the driver banged the door, climbed to his box, and then, on the wheels revolving, the windows set up a pleasant jangling noise—one, however, that never increased to a painful degree, through the extremely gentle pace of the animal in the shafts.

CHAPTER XIV.—QUEEN SCALDER AT HOME.

"P'R'APS you'll keep your obserwations until they're ast for, ma'am," said Mrs. Scaldar, in very indignant tones, to Jane.

The former lady was seated in her kitchen, in an easy chair—that is to say, in the nearest approach to one that could be tolerated in a kitchen—to wit, an armed Windsor, containing a couple of old chintz-covered cushions, made by Mrs. Scaldar herself, and stuffed with the denudations of many a chicken and duckling, for her own especial comfort.

Mrs. Scaldar looked very red-faced and angry, for, as it was half-past four by the timepiece in the hall, Jane had ventured upon making a remark respecting the extra company to dinner, and the slightly backward state of the preparations. The fire was very low—so low, in fact, that it had ceased to move the smoke-jack; and though a large piece of sirloin of beef was down, the spit turned not. There were sundry saccharine delicacies in the oven, but the door was partly open, and matters inside quite at a standstill. Cinders had fallen into the dripping pan, causing a large amount of acrid smoke to arise—a vapour of most unsavoury odour—but they had not been removed. On the table was a heterogeneous collection of plates, dishes, unwashed vegetables, butter, pepper, salt, flour, lard, two fowls, a tongue, paste pin, board, a mass of dough, a large white basin containing custard, and a variety of odds and ends, such as patty pans, spoons, knives, et cetera. Altogether, the place indicated that considerable preparations had been in progress, until a strike had brought matters to a standstill. Even the great Dutch clock had run down, and stopped with a dissipated aspect, one weight being in a vegetable basket, the other resting in the charcoal stove.

The milkman came at his usual time, and had to fetch for himself a couple of jugs, wherein he measured out the required quantity, unhooked from his can a little tin containing cream, and then made such an unpleasant remark to her majesty in the Windsor-chair, that she felt herself bound to hurl at him her sceptre of rule—to wit, the large iron basting-spoon she held in her hand; but probably, from want of practice, the aim was bad, and the milkman retreated, grinning, with the remark that, "Cooks is sech a rum lot,"—the iron sceptre only sweeping a plate from the dresser to fall, with a splintering crash, into the middle of the floor.

It was at this moment that Jane, entering the kitchen with her face tied up, felt herself called upon to drop a hint to the effect that time was flying, and that there would be seven to dinner.

"P'r'aps you'll keep your observations till they're ast for, ma'am; and if you want a cup o' tea, you'd better have it before I'm too busy to make room for you, for I've had mine."

Jane looked hard at the speaker for a few moments.

"Hadn't I better get the fish ready for you, cook? I've done best part of my cloth, and master's a decanting the wine."

"When I wants your assistance, ma'am, I'll ast for it! The cod's in the fish-kettle, and the hysters is—is— Bless me! How cur'us! Now, where did I put them hysters?"

The question of the absent oysters seemed so exceedingly ludicrous that Mrs. Scaldar shook her head and laughed heartily, ending by beaming pleasantly upon Jane.

"Let me make up your fire for you—do!" exclaimed that young lady. "There'll be such a rum-pus if the dinner aint ready! And, lor, cook!" she exclaimed as the full extent of the culinary chaos burst upon her. "Why, there's as good as nothing done! Why, you aint washed the vegetables, nor finished the custard, nor egged and crumbed the cutlets, nor nothing!"

The smile vanished from Mrs. Scaldar's countenance, and she glared wrathfully at Jane. The next moment, though, she was shedding tears, and a sob or two of a very gentle character shook her frame. But the sternness of the woman of the world soon re-asserted itself, and clouds began to gather.

"Young woman," she exclaimed, majestically, "perhaps you'll attend to your cloth, and salat, and hot plates, and let me attend to mine! I've lived in



the first of families, in my time, where there was gentlemen kep', in and out of livery, and no jumped-up housemaids interfering because they had to wait table, and there was comp'ny—such comp'ny, too, as I never see!"

"Oh, very well!" said Jane, indignant that her kind offers were so treated. "It's not my business, so I don't care."

"No, my dear—of course you don't!" said Mrs. Scalter, smiling once more, half closing her eyes, and, in the exuberance of the mirth which now attacked her, indulging in a roll in her chair. "It aint your business, my dear; and now, as you've learned to keep your place, I don't mind being civil in return, my dear; so, if you'll just put your hand round the corner in that cupboard, you'll find something; and I'd take it kindly, my dear, if you'll fill a glass for yourself, and give me one."

Mrs. Scalter seemed to be again moved by some internal source of mirth, for she smiled frequently, and accompanied each smile by a waggish shake of the head.

"Indeed, I shan't do nothing of the sort!" said Jane, indignantly. "I haven't forgotten that bother about the brandy the other night, and shouldn't have thought as you would."

"P'raps you haven't, my dear, and p'raps you have; and p'raps you'll leave it alone," said Mrs. Scalter, smiling, but only to grow the next moment very irate, and to strike the unfortunate cat a violent topper for licking in the half-cold dripping-pan. "You wagabone!" she ejaculated, adjuring pussy ferociously as that animal retreated behind one of the vessels upon the pot-board, while Jane indulged in a toss of her head, for at that moment she was summoned away by a ring.

CHAPTER XV.—HEAT IN THE KITCHEN.

THE brazen jangling seemed to be not without its effect upon Mrs. Scalter, who rose with some difficulty, crossed to the cupboard, and from a corner brought out a black pint bottle, whose cork refused to leave the neck without the leverage of a fork, and then came out piecemeal. Then the lady filled an egg-cup, skimmed off some scraps of cork, tossed off the liquid, refilled, and then tossed off once more; after that she yawned, gazed round the fire-place, whose blackness she proceeded to remedy by scraping out the cinders and grease from the pan, and throwing them on the all but extinct fire, thus creating a bright but evanescent blaze, which, however, she made more lasting with three or four lumps—in the whole about a pound—of lard from the table, and a piece of suet from the flour tub, in whose meal she gave her hands a dry wash to get rid of the lardiness. Then, fetching three bundles of wood, she cut the strings and deposited them upon the flaring fat, finishing off with some "nubby" coals, when the fire roared merrily and soon began to turn the jack, the jack began to turn the spit, the spit began to roast the meat, the saucepans began to simmer and sing, and altogether matters were progressing in a much more favourable manner when Jane re-entered the kitchen, to find Mrs. Scalter now engaged in lighting the oven fire, which was also soon after roaring away.

Jane nodded her head with satisfaction, tightened the handkerchief round her jaw, put her plates to warm, partook of a hasty cup of tea, and then went off to attend to other duties; while Mrs. Scalter went hastily to work, seized the fowls and tongue,

plunged them into a saucepan of water—out of which, though, she first fished with a fork a large, drab-coloured sausage, which was bobbing about at the surface. Then, covering the saucepan, she placed it in the hottest blaze, and then stood and stared at the sausage.

"Well," she at last exclaimed, "if it aint them dratted hysters!"—and she lifted the bladder full of boiled oysters by one end—"but how they got in there I no more know than I do where I put that there cod. P'raps it was the cat," she said, at length.

When, apparently overwhelmed by the humour of her speech, she leaned against the table, had a hearty, silent laugh, and then wiped her eyes and nose upon her apron.

Then Mrs. Scalter started; for she heard a step in the passage, and the voice of Mrs. Jones speaking to Jane.

"Now, I jest aint going to have you here, ma'am, so you needn't think it," exclaimed Mrs. Scalter, irascibly. "Jest keep your place, and I'll keep mine."

And then she began rattling the ladle in the dripping tin, opening and banging the oven-door, making altogether a great deal of noise, and then scuffling to the door, and laying her hand upon it at the same moment as her mistress.

"Well, coook," began Mrs. Jones.

"There, mum," said Mrs. Scalter, "don't come here, if you please! Heverythink's agoing on as well as it can; so don't please come a-syiling your dress with the kitchen in this state."

"But you'll be quite ready at half-past six, coook?" said Mrs. Jones, retreating.

"To be sure I shall, mum; so don't you fret about that," muttered Mrs. Scalter, as Mrs. Jones departed. "Don't want her here!"

Mrs. Scalter once more came to a standstill, and looked about her.

"Now, wherever did I putt that dratted fish? How odd things do seem this afternoon, and it's allus the way if one's a bit extry busy. There's everythink wants doing at once, and not a bit of help, and one may work and slave, and myle and tyle, and putt the codfish— Now, where did I putt that dratted cod?"

Probably Mrs. Scalter surmised, for apparently a little more at ease in her mind, she went to the cupboard, made an application to the black bottle and egg-cup, smiled very pleasantly, and then went and basted the meat before going to make the oven fire roar a little louder with a bundle of wood, when, evidently now meaning business, she had a look at the vegetables.

Now, as may easily be supposed, on a grand company night, when Mrs. Jones wished everything to show to the best advantage, Jane had plenty to do; so, after her cup of tea, and with the knowledge that "Missus" had been to see how matters went on in the kitchen, she went and gave a few finishing touches to the table, placed the chairs, trimmed the fire, removed all the chintz covers, and then was summoned to assist the ladies.

First, Miss Grace wanted a sandal sewn on one

slipper—a slipper not first examined by poor little drudge Mary—and then she would feel so much obliged if Jane would “do” her back hair, which “doing” done, Bella discovered that “that Mary” had left a hook off her dress, and no wonder, for the poor little maid had suffered a great deal with her sprain. Then Mrs. Jones would be so glad if the girls could spare Jane for five minutes, which meant twenty, while poor Jane grew so hot and flustered that she untied her face, and forgot all about neuralgic pains for the rest of the evening.

“And it’s lucky I did clean myself in good time,” said Jane, as she made flying incursions to dining and drawing rooms—now to close shutters, then to draw curtains; and she was in the act of stoking the dining-room fire when Mr. Jones came in and looked at the clock, asking, at the same time, how long Mrs. Jones would be.

“Not a many minutes now, sir.”

And away ran Jane to once more distribute her busy fingers amongst the ladies.

“There’s the fly, Jane!” cried Mrs. Jones; and, as Jane dashed off, Mrs. Jones hurried to her sisters. “Now, darlings,” she cried, kissing them, “recollect hearts are trumps!”

“For shame!—how naughty!—I never did, I’m sure!” fell from the fair sisters’ lips.

But Mrs. Jones was already descending—ready with her lord to receive the guests.

“Oh, by the way,” said Jones, “I did not tell you, my dear. Let me introduce Mr. Tom Barnard, a particular friend of my friends.”

Mrs. Jones even stood that—the coming of a bachelor friend unexpected again. Jones, on the strength of an inch, was taking an ell, indeed! but Mrs. Jones bore it all charmingly, and warmly greeted Tom.

“Plenty of excuses for being so late, Mrs. Jones,” began Askew.

“They are not needed, I’m sure,” was the reply. “See; my sisters are only this moment ready.”

Tom Barnard started at the word “sisters,” partly with the forlorn hope that Mary might be with them, and also with anxiety as to how he would be received.

Bella and Grace, too, were somewhat taken aback to find him there, and of course recalled the last meeting; but, like most people similarly circumstanced, they swam with the stream, bending gracefully over the introduction; while Tom earnestly set to work to place them at ease so far as he was concerned, and show them that he could forgive anything in the sisters of little Mary, of whose state he burned to ask, but did not dare, lest he should undo what had been done.

Bella thought him much nicer than she expected; but she was surprised at his being Mr. Potter’s friend; while Grace felt sure he was not very bad, or Mr. Askew would not seem to like him so.

“Let’s see,” said Tom Barnard to himself, at the end of ten minutes; “there’s a game on here. Hearts are trumps, too! Hum! I must mind my p’s and q’s. What’s my best policy? Well, of course, not to stand in anybody’s way. Heigho! What a shame that they didn’t bring that poor little darling! Duxton’s beginning to grow bearable.”

“That chap’s getting dooced civil to Miss Smallbois,” said Mr. Potter, suddenly, to Mr. Askew.

But that gentleman did not pay much attention, for he was indignant that Tom Barnard, whom they had been the means of introducing, should have seated himself between Bella and Grace, and had that very moment glanced at him and whispered to her, when she had laughed.

“He’s making fun—he’s telling her I’m too stout,” thought Askew. But he was wrong.

“Let me see,” thought Tom Barnard; “if I back up the lady of the house, and side with these well-grown virgins, I shall be all right, and always a welcome visitor, in spite of the old hunks of a father. Now, I wonder which is which? Miss Smallbois, here, is big, so by rule she would want to have chubby little Askew. I won’t trust to rule, though—I’ll draw a bow at a venture, and go in for the exception.”

Then, turning to Bella, he said—

“What a fine, Herculean fellow Mr. Potter is! Don’t you think so?”

“Oh, yes, Mr. Barnard!” said Bella, gushingly, and thinking him really very much nicer—almost a suitable person for poor Mary. “I do admire men of noble proportions!”

“All right, so far,” said Tom to himself. “Now to get it endorsed.”

And he turned to Grace.

“Askew’s a jolly little chap, isn’t he?”

And now it was that he glanced at that gentleman.

“Oh, yes, isn’t he, Mr. Barnard?” lisped Grace. “He is so full of fun and jokes, and says such droll things!”

“Bravo, Tom Barnard!” said that gentleman to himself. “They don’t stand in my way!”

And whatever else he may have thought, one thing was very plain, and that was that matters had been going on very smoothly in the morning; and Messrs. Potter and Askew were not at all annoyed at having to return to the inn.

“So far, so good!” said Tom; “only I mustn’t spoil it.”

Then, aloud—

“Very good, Miss Grace Smallbois—that’s saying that Mr. Askew’s capital society, and I’m a bore. I shall go and fetch him, to take my place.”

“No—no, please—oh, don’t! I’m sure I didn’t mean—” gushed Grace.

But all the same Tom jumped up, and crossed over to where the two gentlemen—rather glum-looking—were engaged with the master and mistress of the house.

“I give it up,” said Tom. “I’m not a ladies’ man, Mr. Askew. Miss Grace Smallbois votes me a bore.”

The sun of good nature shone out directly all over Mr. Askew, who tripped over to the vacant seat, leaving Jones alone; while, not content, Tom cut in now between Mrs. Jones and Potter, setting that gentleman off sidling slowly towards Bella; when Mrs. Jones’ and Tom’s eyes met, and a smile passed—for they understood one another perfectly—and went on chatting together till the awkward quarter before dinner was pretty well at an end, there being now only one discontented person pre-

sent, every one mentally declaring Tom Barnard to be perfection, except Jones, who wanted to know what that smile meant.

Now, after ushering in the gentlemen, and running up to announce their arrival to the ladies, Jane



engaged in a fierce struggle with Grace in the conquering of certain hooks and eyes, which persisted in asserting that their proper place in society was divorced—at the top of the dress half an inch apart, and gradually increasing to a couple of inches at the waist. But perseverance conquered: the ladies descended, and Jane bustled into the dining-room, where, for the next ten minutes, she was busy placing bread, making up the fire, sweeping up the hearth, lighting candles, getting out wine, arranging screens, napkins, and giving the last touches to the dessert, all ready for putting on the table at a moment's notice, and at last she tied on the apron all ready in the sideboard drawer.

"What a nastysmell of burning from the kitchen!" exclaimed Jane now. "She heard them come. I do hope as she's got everything ready, and then things 'll go beautiful."

Away went Jane down the passage to the kitchen door, tray in hand; but no sooner was that portal opened, than she gave utterance to shriek after shriek of so piercing a nature, that the inmates of the drawing-room came hurrying out into the kitchen to gaze one and all upon Mrs. Scaldar, half-seated, half-reclining upon the floor close to the kitchen fender, her head upon a chair, and her upper garment, which had spread over into the ashes, smouldering rapidly, while in one greasy spot it was beginning to blaze to such an extent, that a few minutes' delay, and instead of a farce, a tragedy would have occupied the audience at Richmond Villa.

The ladies, as they entered, gave utterance to loud cries, but they seemed to have no effect upon Mrs. Scaldar, who was apparently unconscious.

"Here—water—quick!" cried Jones, but no one brought it.

"Don't faint," said Potter, in a gruff whisper, to Bella.

"I'll try not to, Mr. Potter," she said, softly, as she clung to his arm.

"There's no danger," whispered Mr. Askew to Grace, who leaned upon him heavily.

"But are you sure—quite sure, Mr. Askew?"

"I wouldn't give twopence for their chance if they mean single blessedness," muttered Tom Barnard, as he dashed at the dresser, snatched from a hook a pair of scissors, and then going down upon one knee, regardless of appearances, snipped and scissored away piece after piece of the burning stuff dress, accompanied in some cases by morsels of not warm, but decidedly hot, underclothing.

But there was no help for it; had this wholesale shearing—this garment surgery—been delayed but for a few minutes longer, the cook of so many dinners would have herself been cooked. Through Tom's energy, though, all danger was soon at an end; but had Mrs. Scaldar stood up, she would probably have presented the appearance of the little old lady whom, in legend old, one Tinker Stout shamefully insulted to such an extent that even her own little dog knew her not. But as Mrs. Scaldar was not called upon to sit up, those around only expressed sympathy.

"Poor creature, it must be a fit!" said Bella.

"Apoplexy!" said Mr. Potter.

"Indeed!" said Askew, anxiously gazing at the sufferer, for he recalled the words he had heard in the train.

But Mr. Jones said nothing: he only glanced at his wife, whose eyes were rolling round the chaotic kitchen, ending with so furious a glance at Jane, that she, poor girl, shivered and seemed to feel pain in her jaw, for her hand immediately went up to the tender place.

"Would this be of any use?" said Bella, tendering salts.

"Or this?" said Grace, offering her vinaigrette.

"Thanks, no," said Tom Barnard, "only to keep away the rather unpleasant odour. How are you



now, old lady?" he exclaimed, rather unfeelingly, some thought; but then, as a medical man, Tom understood the complaint.

"It's them dratted hysters!" said Mrs. Scaldar, feebly.

"Something about hoist her," said Mr. Potter. "Haden't she better be carried to bed?"

"I think, gentlemen, you had better take away the ladies," said Tom, quietly.

And his eyes sought Mrs. Jones's, but that lady's



were busy rolling over the dinner, and stood out more than usual, for she was half-choked with anger and chagrin.

"Jane," said she, at last, in a cold, calm, majestic sort of voice, that drew towards her the owner of that name—a name so dear to all tenor vocalists—"Jane, what is the matter with the cook?"

"Oh, it must be a fit!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones's sisters: and Grace was going to add, "I wish papa were here," only she checked herself.

"Fit! fit!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones, indignantly—"fit for a prison, or a workhouse, or a police-station—a bad, abandoned creature! Tell me this minute, Jane, what is the matter with the cook?"

"Well, ma'am, if you please, ma'am," whimpered Jane, "indeed it wasn't my fault. I says to her—I says, 'You won't be ready, cook,' I says, and I did want to help her, only she quite huffed me out of the kitchen."

"But what—" began Mrs. Jones.

"I was going to tell you, ma'am," said Jane, hastily, "I begged and prayed of her to get on, only she said as her hassmy spasms was so bad that unless she had a drop of sperrits she must drop. So she sent for some, ma'am, and I'm afraid it's been stronger than usual, and overcome her."

"I thought as much," said Jones, dolefully.

"Why, you don't mean to say—" ejaculated Askew.

"Pray, help me to get the ladies away," said Mr. Potter.

"Ah! that's right," said Tom Barnard.

And soon the kitchen held four less.

Mrs. Jones would not accompany her sisters, but stood wringing her hands.

"I should half feel disposed to give her some cold water in a bucket," said Tom, who now saw the state of the kitchen affairs.

"Oh, isn't it dreadful, Mr. Barnard?" said Mrs. Jones, pitifully.

"With just a dash of the sperrit in, lor bless you!" murmured Mrs. Scaldar.

"Confound the woman!" cried Jones, savagely. "Here, Barnard, lay hold of that arm—Jane, open that laundry door."

The next minute Mrs. Scaldar was pleasantly reposing upon the floor of the mangle-room, with the fallen iron-stand beneath the small of her back, and her head supported by the bag of clothes-pegs, placed pillow-wise from purely philanthropic feeling by Mr. Tom Barnard.

"Would you give her some water?" said Mr. Jones, dubiously.

"With just a dash of the sperrit in," murmured Mrs. Scaldar again, and then she was shut up.

The gentlemen returned to the kitchen, and were then dismissed to help amuse the ladies; but Tom Barnard knew better.

"This is housekeeping," said Jones, gloomily.

"Nearly housewarming, I think," said Tom, laughing. "Here, try a cigar."

"What are you going to do?" said Jones.

"Help!" said Tom, laconically.

"Oh, Jane!" said Mrs. Jones, with the genuine tears of vexation in her eyes. "What shall I do? I did reckon so on this dinner."

Now this was very different from scolding, so Jane brightened up in a moment.

"Why, mum, we must make the best of it. P'raps you wouldn't mind helping a bit?"

"Oh, my good soul, I'll do anything!" said Mrs. Jones.

"Then s'pose you put out the dining-room candles, 'm."

"Done!" said a voice, and, on looking up, there stood Tom Barnard with a napkin pinned round his head, and another formed into an apron. "The new chef—by your leave," said Tom.

"Oh! but, Mr. Barnard, pray go into the drawing-room!" cried Mrs. Jones.



"I think I'd better stay away, really," said Tom, with a dry look. "There, it's all right, my dear Mrs. Jones, and Jones himself is indulging in a cigar. Now, you Jane, take off that handkerchief, or I'll have another tooth out! You don't need that."

He spoke because, after hanging her best cap on a nail, Jane was once more tying up her jaw; but as to what he said about Jones he was wrong; for he was not indulging in a cigar, that gentleman not being very comfortable in his own mind; why, will afterwards be seen.

"Now, let's see," said Tom, briskly. "The question is, how to put a snug dinner on the table in the shortest space of time?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Mrs. Jones, looking appealingly in his face, as she clasped her hands.

"Soup!" said Tom, tasting. "All right, only cold! Now, Jane, stoke up, and make the soup hot! Fish! Where's the fish, Jenny?"

"Here, sir."

"Here, eh? Ah! cod boiled into a mosh-posh! Pop that in the scullery. Oysters, of course! Humph! boiled in their bladder! Never mind; we'll warm 'em up with bread crumbs and butter."

"Oh, Mr. Barnard, you're a treasure!" cried Mrs. Jones. "I shall never get out of your debt!"

"Stop a bit," said Tom. "I shall bring in my bill some day. But business. Now, then, joints: sirloin of beef—cinder and raw. Can't do anything with that. Pop it aside, Jane. What have we here? Chickens and tongue! Hurrah! All right, and about done. Vegetables? Hum! not even a potato. Can't help it! We'll say they are not fashionable. Any *entremets*? What are those, Jane—cinders?"

"They were patties," said Mrs. Jones, wringing her hands, so that the rings crackled again.

"Never mind—cheer up," said Tom, smiling in the disconsolate face before him. "But about second course?"

"Tart's done to nothing, mum, and the tartlets is like coals," said Jane, whose head was in the oven.

"But the blancmange and jelly are all safe, and the custard is nearly made," cried Mrs. Jones.

"Oh! it's all right," said Tom; "and here's the Stilton. Got any celery or salad, Jane?"

"Yes, sir, all safe in the dining-room cupboard."

"Got a cake—sponge, Mrs. Jones?" said Tom.

"Oh, yes, in the dessert," said that lady, eagerly.

"Fetch it then, Jane," said Tom, "and we'll finish the custard, and cut the cake up, and make a trifle. Bring some sherry, too."

Jane ran and fetched the cake and sherry, and was then despatched for a glass dish; and while Tom saw to the soup and custard, Mrs. Jones sliced the cake.

"Now some raspberry jam," said Tom.

"Run, Jane!" cried Mrs. Jones—"on the top shelf."

And she handed the keys.

"We shall have a banquet, ma'am," said Tom, laughing, and thoroughly entering into the fun of the thing.

"Oh, Mr. Barnard!" cried Mrs. Jones, with the tears again in her eyes—but this time of gratitude. "I shall never forget this!"

And she held out her hands.

"All right, my dear madam," said Tom. "We'll talk about that another time."

And he raised one jewelled hand to his lips; but only to stop short as he became conscious of a pale,

haggard face glaring through one of the panes of the kitchen window, when, with a faint shriek, the lady started back.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE JONES' DINNER.

"IT'S—it's only me, my dear," said a smothered voice.

And, directly after, looking very peculiar, Mr. Jones entered the kitchen, to glare from his lady to Tom Barnard, and back again.

"I was having a cigar outside, and I looked in."

"Thought it was a ghost," said Tom, tasting the soup, and giving it a stir round. "Here, hand that salt-box; we want another pinch. Right; now taste that, my boy. But you shouldn't peep through windows at ladies; it's placing panes between you, where there should only be pleasures."

"It was stupid of you, Jones," said Mrs. J.

And he would have made an apology, only he was tasting the soup.

"Now be off," said Tom, coolly.

And he opened the door for the master of the house to perform his exit.

It was undeniable that the best way to treat the matter was as a good joke, and Tom entered into the spirit of it; for, ten minutes after, he had a short consultation with Mrs. Jones and Jane, the result being that Mrs. Jones was despatched to the drawing-room, when, as she opened the door, Tom roared, in a voice of thunder—

"Gentlemen!"

His cry was responded to; and on their appearance, Mr. Jones was laden with plates, Mr. Potter with the tureen, and Mr. Askew bore in a goodly crackling dish of scalloped oysters.

The ladies were fetched to their places, and then, amidst much laughter—a little forced at first—the soup, which proved excellent, went round, Tom dividing his time, with Askew, between waiting and making excursions to the kitchen.

"The next thing on the *menu*," said Tom, consulting the *carte*, "is soup."

"Soup again!" said Jones.

"To be sure: and the same plates."

But only the gentlemen partook. Then followed the oysters, which were a failure, being one and all like little bits of gristle; but a glass of wine round thawed the remaining ice; and when the fragments of the chicken and tongue went out, it was unanimously declared to be the best bit of fun ever enjoyed, and even Mr. and Mrs. Jones looked less despondent than before.

Grace said it was a shame for the gentlemen to wait upon them, as they went out for the second course; and Bella declared it was dreadful; then they tittered, for, following Tom Barnard's example, the said gentlemen laid their hands upon their hearts, and declared that they were in their right places.

Two minutes after, Tom Barnard came back from the kitchen with a rush, to plant the trifle before Mrs. Jones.

"Now, ladies!" he exclaimed, "here comes Mrs. Scaldar!"

"Oh—oh, Mr. Barnard—pray," shrieked the ladies in chorus, and one and all half rose; but

Mrs. Scaldar was only represented in the jelly and blancmange, borne in very carefully on account of their tottering nature by Messrs. Potter and Askew, who both looked exceedingly serious and doubtful, as if they anticipated erratic motions of the quivering shapes, and a rush the next moment to the carpet.

Mr. Jones tried a joke about the tipsy cake, but Tom Barnard laughed, and said it was a trifle, and then everyone else laughed; while, by the time the light confections had been discussed and thoroughly enjoyed, Jane, her cooking done, reappeared, capped and smiling, changed plates, and placed cheese and salad upon the table, and afterwards the dessert, everyone declaring, over the fruit and port, that the dinner was a perfect success, and really, good temper had made it so. Jones alone looked dull, drinking a good deal of wine, and eating more dessert than was good for him, starting almost guiltily whenever Mrs. Jones addressed him in tender accents; but even Jones was better when the ladies had retired to the drawing-room.

It was about this time that, after giving one or two peculiar low whistles in the road without effect, P.-C. Budge, of the county constabulary, moved by a proper desire to see that all was right, walked round the Richmond Villa grounds, ending by accidentally discovering—after a round which resulted in nothing but cats—Jane, up to her eyes in business; but the constable appeared to be so happy in his own mind that all appertaining to the villa was secure, that he sat smiling on the edge of the sink, eating tongue, and picking fowl bones, afterwards scraping out the glass trifle-dish, and finishing off with some cheese and celery. Then he had a pint of beer, while the coffee was being made, Jane bringing him afterwards a goodly mug and some bread and butter.

"I *must* go now," he said, at half-past ten, as if Jane had been begging him to stay the whole time, and he took his departure, just as Jane bore in the urn for the late tea, the fly from the County Arms drawing up at the gate soon after.

But all this time, utterly oblivious of the progress of the hours, the company now gathered in the drawing-room progressed charmingly, Tom Barnard being the life and soul of the party. He cracked jokes to Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and religiously stayed best part of the time at their side; sang Irish songs at the piano to his own accompaniment, and seemed to have made a capital impression upon all, giving Mr. Askew ample time to tell the merits of fishing to Grace, and Potter to discourse learnedly upon geology to the attentive ears of Bella.

"I do wish dear mamma were here," said Mrs. Jones, uttering her thoughts aloud.

"I should like to meet her very much," said Tom, earnestly.

For, amid all the fun, his thoughts had rested long and often upon a little face drawn with pain.

"You shall, Mr. Barnard," was the reply.

And then both looked round for Mr. Jones, who was growling something between his teeth.

"That's how he always goes on, Mr. Barnard, whenever I mention dear mamma; but don't notice him."

"Wait till he gets a mother-in-law," said Jones.

Tom laughed; and when at last Jane came in with a message from the flyman, the clock upon the chimney-piece was declared to be as false as the watches which corroborated its evidence.

It was close upon one, when, having left his friends at the County Arms, and refused to enter, and have a night-cap, Tom Barnard went slowly down the High-street, to stand gazing for a few minutes up at the top window of Dr. Smallbois' house, where there was a light; and then he sighed as he went on, wishing he had asked how she was, and yet glad he had not, telling himself that he ought to be well satisfied with the progress he had made with the three sisters.

It was also about this time that a good deal of banter, and a great deal of curl-paper rustling, might have been heard, were it possible, at Richmond Villa; but it ended in Mrs. Jones kissing her sisters affectionately, and saying some mysterious words about hearts being trumps. She then sought her own room, where, if Mr. Jones was not already snoring, he was performing its well-educated equivalent; and soon peaceful slumber chained the actors in our story.

CHAPTER XVII.—THE DOCTOR'S CHOICE.

EVERYBODY knows what a strange tendency there is in animal life to imitate something that has gone before it. Familiar instances might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, but a couple from the brute and human creation respectively will suffice: watch the first flock of sheep driven along the road, and see whether, if some woolly mass of obstinacy takes a short cut through the gap, all the rest do not follow. To rise higher: wait till you give your next party, to which you have invited a number of people for whom you care not a rap, and see if, as soon as a yawn is given, half a dozen ill-suppressed lip-partings do not follow.

Imitation—imitation everywhere; in fact, we are taught it in our first lessons at school, when we sit laboriously copying the up and down strokes of our letters upon a slate; therefore, it is not surprising that the present writer should have done as nearly everyone in Duxton did—neglected most shamefully poor little Mary Smallbois. But now to make amends.

Poor little maiden! Tom Barnard was no sooner out of sight than she was given into the custody of her sisters, and the doctor started off in a rolling, pompous walk to fetch a fly, leaving the maidens together.

Bella and Grace were too much disgusted to speak; they only shook their heads over the slight little figure seated upon the grass, and waited impatiently for the doctor's return. And really it was a great blessing for the poor child that the silence was sustained, for it enabled her to try and calm down the fluttering little heart, that would keep beating almost painfully. There was a heavy, dull, aching sensation in her ankle; but she hardly felt that, as compared with a strange aching at her heart. It was not her fault; she had come out on a mission of mercy and met with an accident, and it almost seemed at first as if Mr. Barnard thought she was sham-

ming. And yet how gentle, and respectful, and tender he was in his every act and word; and how he had bandaged her ankle, and then carried her, and looked so kind and so nice, and he was so hand-



some, and it was so delightful to be spoken to in such a loving, protecting way, and—

And then little Mary stopped short, and blamed herself for being forward and indiscreet, and ended by having a thoroughly good long cry, which lasted until the fly came to the nearest point in the lane, when the little prisoner contrived to limp painfully to the door, where she nearly fainted, and turned her soft, appealing eyes up at the doctor, who half lifted her in, and then the fly drove off to the High-street, and the captive was taken up to her room.

"Sprained ankle, eh?" said Mrs. Doctor as she stood, very big, rustling, and silky, before her husband.

"Yes," said the doctor. "Send for Mr. Curtis."

"And what for, in the name of all that's sensible?" said his wife.

"What for? Why to attend to the sprain."

"Smallbois, you're going mad. Send for Curtis, indeed!"

"I say send for Curtis!" said the doctor, stamping his foot—and Curtis was sent for.

Mr. Curtis, the rival doctor once; but, since the arrival of Tom Barnard, there had been a coalescion, and forces were joined to drive a common enemy from the field.

"I have my reasons for what I am doing," said the doctor, condescendingly.

"No doubt," said Mrs. Doctor, sarcastically.

"I suppose next you'd like me to take Mr. Barnard by the hand, and introduce him to all my patients?"

"Well, you're regularly taking old Curtis by the hand; and now you've actually sent for him into the house to attend your child."

"Old—old? What do you mean by old, Mrs. Smallbois? Why, he's not above fifty."

"No, but he's stupid enough to be a hundred,"

said Mrs. Doctor. "I haven't patience with him. If you're friendly with another medical man at all, I'm sure it might be with somebody young and decent. You have daughters, recollect; while, as for old Curtis—an ugly old glutton!—if a young lady was something to eat, he'd pay attention to her—not else!"

"Perhaps you'd like me to take Mr. Barnard into partnership," said the doctor, sneeringly; "or to—"

"Old Curtis said you were an ignorant pretender."

"I will not have those old wounds opened, Mrs. Smallbois," said the doctor, authoritatively. "Mr. Curtis will, I have no doubt, be here very frequently in the future, and I insist upon proper respect being paid to him."

"Oh, indeed!" cried Mrs. Doctor, tauntingly. "That's it, is it? Now, look here, S. I've made my arrangements, and I won't have them interfered with, so that's flat! I'm not going to have any of that. I'm not going to plot, and plan, and manage, and then have you putting in your obstinancy to spoil all! And as for this—"

"Please, 'm, here's Dr. Curtis," said a maid.

"Mr. Curtis, Emma," said the doctor, severely.

"Mr. Curtis is only a surgeon. Is he in the drawing-room?"

"Yes, sir."

The doctor rose, gave a triumphant look at his wife, and then went off to the drawing-room, to shake hands most affectionately with Mr. Curtis, a stout, stuffy man—a fine-looking man some people called him, perhaps from the same feeling which would make them apply the term to well-fed, fat-mottled beef. He had two hands—a fact of which everyone became aware before they had been in his society half a minute, for they were a pair of fat, obtrusive flippers, that were always in his way, and hung out before him as if for show. He had not a single feature that you could take hold of—not even his nose, which was a very slight eminence in a desert of fat; while, had it not been for a rounding off at where should have been the corners, his face would have been decidedly square.

"Glad to see you! How do?" said the doctor, with affectionate unctuousness. "I had your name put down as a director."

"But they won't want a cheque, will they?"

"Bless your soul, no!" said the doctor, slapping him in a friendly way upon the back. "But, look here, Mary's managed to sprain her ankle, and I thought if you—"

"My dear Smallbois—my dear Smallbois! this is really very—very kind of you! Poor child! Yes, I'm sure it is an opportunity."

"And, I say," said the doctor, jocosely, "the enemy—first on the field—met her out, only I put a stop to it."

"You don't say so?"

"Yes, a fact; but don't you be uneasy; it's all right. Come along!"

Poor little Mary Smallbois was rather taken by surprise upon seeing Mr. Curtis arrive; but upon the termination of his ministrations, she held out her hand with a pleasant little smile, which sent the old boy into raptures as he caught the white hand in his, and would have kissed it, had it not

been rapidly withdrawn, so that he kissed his own thumb instead, and did not seem so well satisfied as might have been expected.

In fact, as the two medical men departed, little Mary grew very much puzzled, especially as Mrs. Doctor stayed behind, to arrange her more comfortably upon the couch; and what with the pain, the puzzlement, and the kindness she was receiving—a thing she was not accustomed to—the little lady could hardly bear it, especially when Mrs. Doctor leaned over and gave her a sounding kiss, shook her head mysteriously, and then left the room. But Mary told herself that she had had enough tears, and strove hard to beat them down, till her thoughts wandered to two medical men in Duxton town, and the name of one was Curtis, and of the other, Barnard.

CHAPTER XVIII.—ATTRACTION.

TOM BARNARD did not neglect his business, for he had none to neglect, and to his credit be it said, that he never let a day pass without many hours' hard professional study. But that study was a good deal taken up with thoughts of his little patient, and at times Tom looked very dull and miserable, till, passing down the High-street one day he gazed up at the house, to see at an open window, half concealed by a screen of flowers—not one of which was so sweet as herself—little Mary, and with her big Bella.

Tom raised his hat, to receive in reply a slight bend from Mary, and a smile and a wave of the hand from Bella, who was dressed as if paying a visit to home; and then away went Tom as hard as ever he could pelt across the fields to John Coulty's cottage, talked to the old man for an hour, left him some more medicine, and an ounce of bird's-eye, over which the old fellow was half insane with delight, and then away went Tom back towards the town.

"It's all right, bless her little heart!" cried Tom. "Only wants time and patience, and—and, well, yes, money. But I'll have her yet."

Tom's reveries were somewhat damped upon his re-entering the town, by the appearance of stout old Doctor Curtis, who met him full, but stared straight before, and would not see his *confrère*.

"A rude old bear," muttered Tom, who strode on faster.

But only to encounter Doctor Smallbois at the end of another fifty yards, looking very fierce—for there was a custom at Duxton, under the pretence of cleansing the roads, of scraping all the dirt to the side and there leaving it, and it had so happened that, not heeding where he stepped, Doctor Smallbois, out on a professional call, had planted a lustrous boot right over the instep in the soft mud, and splashed his glossy pantaloon into the bargain, while, to make matters worse, Tom Barnard must let his eye fall upon the state of affairs, and stare at it hard, to the doctor's great annoyance, for he flourished his cane savagely as soon as he was past.

"There's some poor fellow in a sore strait," muttered Tom, "and those two chaps will blunder and squabble over him—but there, it's no business of mine."

He went home.

"Anybody been?"

"No, sir."

"Might have known that," muttered Tom, and then he sat down to think—what should he do?

It was three days since the dinner at the Jones's—he might call again now, surely. Why not call at the County Arms, and ask his new friends to walk down with him?

"Try it," said Tom, abruptly, and he walked to the inn.

"Been gone out a couple o' hours, sir," said Charles.

Away posted Tom for Richmond Villa, taking it for granted that they were there.

But Mr. Tom Barnard was wrong—they were not there; for it so happened that, after a good deal of coaxing, Askew had worked Mr. Potter round into going for a walk, and they passed through the town just in time to encounter their fellow-traveller of a few nights before.

Mr. Askew swelled with anger as he met him, and uttered little defiant snorts similar to those vented by irate turkey-cocks; while the stranger's aspect was furious—an aspect which increased alarmingly as he heard the friends exclaim, on the one part, "Humbug!" on the other, "Consummate impudence!"

The frowns on the faces of Messrs. Potter and Askew soon disappeared, and before they had gone a mile, they discovered that, by a strange coincidence, the young ladies from Richmond Villa were out for a walk, having been home, ostensibly to see dear mamma, but really to obtain toilet reinforcements.

It must have been from magnetic influence that the conversation turned upon them, for Askew gave his friend a nudge in the ribs, as he said—



"Potter, you're on strong after that girl Bella: you mean her, I'm sure."

"Who, I? Pooh, nonsense! Why, I was staring all the time at the way you carried on with Grace."

"Well," said Askew, "that's nothing. I always did go in for being attentive. 'Tis my nature to; but it never means anything."

"Same here," said Potter. "I did once love, when I was a boy, but the rosebud is no more."

"Full blown, eh?"

"No chaff, now; but who's this?"

"The ladies, by Jove!" said Askew.

And the next minute the couples had paired, and were strolling on by the most indirect way to Richmond Villa—a way that took a good hour to traverse.

What the conversation was it is impossible to report, from the simple fact that it was all carried on in an extremely low tone. But eyes frequently met eyes, only to be cast down directly; and the subject must have been important, or else Grace would never have said to herself, as they reached the gate—

"I shall be the first married, after all."

CHAPTER XIX.—A MEDICAL CONFERENCE.

FOR a few minutes we must here take the reader back for a day or two. Tom Barnard was right; there was somebody very ill, and the two medical men had agreed to meet and have a consultation over his case. Tom was not aware of how strong a combination was in progress against him, in practical, as well as in another matter nearer his heart; but Duxton folks, who saw everything, and heard everything, even including what did not occur, paid a great deal of attention to the friendly feeling that seemed of late to have been springing up, though they only attributed it to a dislike to the interloper, not seeing that there was more behind.

"Just met the enemy," said Dr. Smallbois, pleasantly, as he was joined by his *confrère*.

"So did I, Smallbois," said Mr. Curtis. "He's an arrogant-looking puppy, isn't he?"

"Hang him, yes. I do hope most sincerely that no one will be foolish enough to call him in. It would be so sad, you know, if he, in his ignorance, should commence wrong treatment, and some poor creature be called upon to suffer."

"Dreadful! But, I say, Smallbois—he! he! he!—I expect we shall have a *post mortem* or two through him, eh?"

"If we do, he won't stop here long after," said the doctor, savagely.

"Please, master's ready, if you'll step up now," said a voice, and the doctors rose.

Their consultation had been carried on in the dining-room of one Jeremiah Chough, Esq., a retired grocer, who regularly, once a fortnight, ate himself into a state of congestion, made sure he was going to die, called in, as he was disposed, Messrs. Smallbois and Curtis, got better, and then set to and ate again. He was quite an annuity to the two doctors, who reigned in turn until they offended him; but the last of the game in season having lately been on the way, previous to that dreadful interregnum of months before August, Mr. Jeremiah Chough had been taking in cargo to such an extent, that one night, about twelve, both doctors had been summoned in haste, to find the patient hurriedly adding a codicil to his will before ceasing

to take further interest in epicureanism for the future.

But the doctors relieved him; he did not die, only came to the conclusion that there must be something radically wrong in his system, and a special consultation had therefore been called.

The patient was seen, and for half an hour he was pinched, and punched, and listened to through tubes; and then the doctors descended again to the dining-room, to settle about Mr. Chough's condition.

There was a decanter of port on the table to assist the consideration of the important question, and the doctors took wine together affably twice, and then, in a very solemn manner, shook hands; after which they again took wine, threw themselves back in their chairs, and this was how they disposed of Mr. Chough's case—

"You'll settle two thousand on her, then?"

"Yes, that I will. I've promised you again and again. And I say, Smallbois, I know I'm not young and good-looking, but I'll be a first-rate husband to her. See how we two will be able to work the district together."

"Not much chance for the enemy then, Curtis, eh?"

"It's a shame, my dear friend—a shame that such boys should be let loose from the hospitals to prey upon society!"

"Disgraceful—disgraceful!"

"Spends nearly all his time drinking at the County Arms. We shall have him to dose, one of these days, for D. T."

"Hope he won't be stupid enough to send for me, that's all I can say," said the doctor. "A vagabond! Nice creature to have in anybody's house!"

"He—he ain't seen her since, has he, Smallbois?" said Mr. Curtis.

"No; and I'll take care he don't," said the doctor.

"You—you don't think there can be anything there—nothing to fear, you know, eh? Young ladies are very foolish sometimes, and listen to these wandering vagabonds."

"My dear sir, you may have every confidence in what I say. I shall tell her to look upon you as her future husband, and that will be sufficient. My children are too well brought up to rebel."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of that, my dear Smallbois. She's a little angel, I know; but, situated as I am, I can't help feeling anxious."

"There—there, be easy," said the doctor. "Now another glass of wine. Come in."

"Master says, sir, as he'd like to see you both before you go."

"Yes, yes," said the doctor, unctuously. "We'll come up, certainly, as soon as we have concluded our consultation."

And the maid left the room.

"I've seen her to-day," said Mr. Curtis, "and the ankle is, as you know, about well."

"Never mind that," laughed the doctor—"I should not give up my patient yet."

"No, no, I won't," said Mr. Curtis, rubbing his fat hands together.

"Call every day, of course."

"But I—I don't think Mrs. Smallbois is quite so glad to see me as she might be."

"Fancy—fancy! Call as often as you like; you're free of the house, my boy—free as the wind, and all shall go as you wish. Suppose now, though, we turn to money matters?"

Mr. Curtis did not quite seem to see this, and entered into the subject somewhat reluctantly; but the doctor pressed him, and for the next half-hour an animated conversation was carried on, in which the words bond and bill occurred several times over, and pens, ink, and paper were brought into use.

At last, though, the two doctors rose—Smallbois with a pleasant, satisfied air of content—and they turned towards the door.

"By the way," said one, "we must go upstairs and see him before we go."

"Oh, yes; I'd almost forgotten him," said the other.

"Blue and a black, of course?"

"No, no; try podophyllin."

"Just as you like, only we must alter the form. Come along."

The other did "come along," the patient was visited, and the doctors departed, the knowledge of the conference having had such a soothing effect upon the sufferer, that he soon afterwards sunk into a pleasant doze, and awoke some hours after sufficiently refreshed to be able to drink half-a-pint of port, and devour half a chicken, with vegetables, and a light pudding.

It was about this time that poor Mary's ears were burning, and she sat busily at work, wondering who was talking about her, little thinking what a marketable little body she was to be made, and how a settlement had been determined upon, and sundry money arrangements, by which her beloved parent was to free himself from a few responsibilities incurred through speculating. She ought to have been very happy, for she had received a great deal of attention of late; but somehow or another, little Mary did not feel easy in her own mind. She was shrewd enough to see that something was afoot upon which the doctor and his lady were not one, and that she was the object. Once the suspicion had crossed her mind that Mr. Curtis must mean something by his almost sickening adulation and attention, and more than once he had stood looking at her as if he had something to say; but what that was she did not hear, for at such times Mrs. Smallbois had managed to charge into the room, and Mr. Curtis smiled, and went away.

Mary did not own it to herself, but a great deal of the unsettled feeling by which she was troubled was caused by that encounter; but when Tom Barnard's face did present itself, which was very often, the little maiden only shook her head, thought about papa's animosity, and felt disposed to cry, till the day when Mrs. Smallbois returned from her visit to Richmond Villa—a day when, to her surprise, Bella and Grace mentioned having met Tom Barnard, who was, "after all, very nice indeed," an announcement which seemed to jar on Mary's heart-strings when Tom himself happened to pass, and bowed.

But Mary's wonder was increased, and a strange fluttering came amongst those vibrating strings, just as if a hand was touching them lightly, when Mrs. Smallbois kissed her, and told her she must limp about, and help to prepare for the dinner party on Friday, ending by driving all the blood back to the little trembler's heart, as she said—

"And I've asked that Mr. Barnard to come, too. He's a great friend of Jones and his visitors. I shall not say anything to papa: and then, when he's here, he must be civil to him, for he seems a very nice fellow."

"Oh, but mamma, please don't ask him! Papa would be so angry."

And Mary trembled for the result, and dreaded lest "poor" Mr. Barnard should again be insulted.

"Be quiet, you little goose!" cried Mrs. Doctor. "There, go along; I'm not cross. Don't I tell you he's coming?"

Mary made no reply, but went away, shivering, to her room.

CHAPTER XX.—A PLEASANT POSITION.

TOM BARNARD set out for a walk. For the fact is, he had no sooner shut himself in his own room than he began to think about little Mary, and thinking about little Mary brought up old John Coulbty.

"Please her to think I don't neglect him," said Tom, with a sigh.

And then he went into his surgery, and made up a large bottle of medicine, whose component parts were port wine and eau de vie—"one table spoonful every six hours"—and then, with the bottle banging against his legs, he strode off.

It is of no use to say that he did not calculate upon the possibility of the little maid being there, because he did; and, strangely enough—paying her first visit since the spraining of the ankle—there sat Mary, ready to start up, blushing, as Tom entered the cottage.

"Here we are, doctor," piped the old man, who was holding tightly by one of Mary's hands. "He's a'most cured me, Miss Mary, and I mean to dance at your wedding, after all."

If poor little Mary blushed before, her countenance now rivalled the ruddy flowers in the bunch she had brought the old gardener, when Tom came to the rescue.

"You see how my medicine makes his tongue run, Miss Smallbois," he said. "But pray, do not let me drive you away."

"I must—I was—I had just risen to go," said Mary, telling a fib.

"Sit thee down, bairn—sit thee down," said the old gardener; and accustomed to obey in all things, the little maiden once more took her seat, while old John told "the doctor" how he had been "a wonderful sight" better ever since his first visit.

Not that old John had all the talking, for Tom Barnard had plenty to say; till, seeing the real trouble in which little Mary seemed to be, and her anxiety to leave, he rose to go himself.

"No—no, Mr. Barnard, please!" she exclaimed, in protest. "I know John would like you to stay, if you would."

"If I would?" said Tom, in a tone almost of reproach.

"I mean—I—that is," said Mary, trembling in voice and limb, she hardly knew why—"I think I'll go now, please."

Tom went to open the door, but he was forestalled by Mrs. Coulby, who opened it a few inches, and then clapped it to again, exclaiming—

"Oh, my dear heart alive!"

"Hallo!" said Tom. "Why, what's the matter?"

As he spoke he walked to the window, when, to his great disgust, he became aware that, after weeks of neglect, Doctor Smallbois had chosen this one, of all days, to pay a visit to the cottage.

Little Mary became aware of the fact at the same moment; and in her pale, scared face Tom read the horror she felt of the impending meeting.

For his part, he was not in the slightest degree afraid of the doctor, and, for a change, would rather have enjoyed a row; but then he was her father, and every word said would cause her pain. They must not meet; but then, how was it to be avoided? It would be so contemptible to hide—and from a man, too, whom he despised. But then, was that poor, gentle little girl to be called upon to suffer again? No; he'd do a score of contemptible things first!

"Here, Mrs. Coulby," he exclaimed—"quick! shut me up somewhere—anywhere out of sight!"

"No—no, Mr. Barnard," cried Mary, excitedly, for she was frightened.

Matters were taking a turn that she did not like. It was as though she were linking herself with a stranger to deceive her parent, and, in addition, her sensitive little heart was beating a series of tiny alarm notes, quite new to her, but full of foreboding.

"We must not meet," said Tom, earnestly, as he caught her hand in his. "I detest this deception, but, indeed, I think it will be better. See how the old folks are scared!"

Perhaps another minute's thought would have induced Tom Barnard to have acted differently, but then there was not another minute to spare; and, acting upon impulse, he gently forced Mary into a chair by the bedstead, and the next moment he had stepped into a large closet, the door of which was held open for him by Mrs. Coulby, who was shaking like a leaf. The door was then banged to, and Tom was in the dark, not daring to move lest he should bring something down with a clatter.

And yet it was not at all comfortable, to stand as he did, hat in hand; for above him was a shelf evidently containing the family tea-things; and it was only by keeping his head on one side, and his neck cricked, that he was able to keep from raising the shelf, perhaps to the demolition of the domestic crockery ware. Three or four very thin candles hung close to his nose; upon a nail behind his head was suspended a frying-pan, while a touch of his elbow caused a gridiron, similarly hung, to swing to and fro—a very gridiron pendulum. Even his footing was unsafe, for he was standing upon about a bushel of small potatoes, with a strong disposition to roll from under his feet.

"Well, if this isn't making a pretty fool of myself, I've no brains left in my pan," muttered Tom.

"How could I be such a donkey as to get in here? Confound that gridiron, what a row it makes!"

"Well, John—well, John, and how are we now?" said the doctor, loudly, every word sounding as if it were shouted in Tom Barnard's ear.

"Nistely, sir, thanky," said the old man, gruffly.

"Humph! I expected to find you dead—poisoned," exclaimed the doctor.

"Thanky kindly, sir," said old John.

"I shall have this cursed shelf clattering down before I've done," muttered Tom. "What an ass I have made of myself, to be sure."

Then he listened; of course, to hear no good of himself.

"I'm afraid you've been doing very wrong, John, in calling in fresh advice," continued the doctor, feeling the old man's pulse. "Ah! just as I thought: you're very feverish."

"Hadh't you better make haste back, and send me some physic, sir?" said John.

"Yes, John, I must send you something," said the doctor. "You've been letting an ignorant hospital-runner tamper with your fine constitution, and—"

"Ding-dong! ding-dong! ding-dong!" went the frying-pan, softly, in the cupboard—for Tom had inadvertently started, and sent it swinging to and fro.

"S cat, 's cat, 's cat!" cried Mrs. Coulby, loudly, while there was a look of such pain crossed little Mary's face, that her aspect was quite pitiable.

For the little maiden felt lowered and humbled; and as she thought of the possibility of a discovery, her heart beat violently with shame and dread.

"I can't think what you could have been thinking about, John," continued the doctor. "Now, there's that old eight-day clock of yours in that corner—it goes well, don't it?"

"Goes well, sir? Ay, indeed it do. I on'y wish I went half as well."

"Just so," said the doctor. "Now, if that was out of order you'd take it to old Ratchem, the watch-maker, in the High-street—wouldn't you? You wouldn't call in some travelling scamp."

"Ding-dong!" went the frying-pan again.

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.
And Manchester and Liverpool.

The Spider of Duxton.

BEING THE ADVENTURES OF THREE BELLES,
THREE BEAUX, AND A MARRIED COUPLE.

CHAPTER XXI.—FOUND OUT.



I WOULDN'T take no notice, miss," said Mrs. Coulby, "it's on'y that there cat—I shut him up in the cupboard."

"Of course," continued the doctor. "You'd take it to Ratchem."

"Nay, that I wouldn't," piped old John. "He don't know no more about a clock's innards than that there chair. Charged me six and threepence, he did, and the clock's gone wheezy ever since, just as if it had got a cricket inside 'un."

"Well—well, John, I'll send you a little something to take," said the doctor, somewhat disconcertedly, and he then rose. "I'll soon put you back where you were, John, never fear—never fear. Now, Mary."

"I'm ready, papa," said Mary, with alacrity.

"But, stop a minute, Miss Mary, please," piped old John. "There's them mignonette seeds as you asked me for. Get 'em down, old woman, will 'ee? They're on ta shelf in the cupboard."

"No—no; not now, John,—not now," cried Mary, excitedly. "Papa cannot wait."

"Oh, yes, I can wait; I'm not in a hurry to-day," said the doctor; who liked better to receive than to give. "Get out the seeds, Mrs. Coulby."

"I think—I think I'd rather not wait, papa," said poor Mary, faintly. "The room is close; and if you would not mind—"

There was no deceit in Mary's words—or the doctor would not have hastily led her out into the fresh air—for her face was like ashes. But in a few minutes she had recovered herself, and the doctor, after a curious glance or two, and a little hesitation, as if he expected that something were behind, walked pompously away by her side.

"You may come out now, Mr. Barnard, sir," said Mrs. Coulby.

Tom emerged from his concealment, hot, angry, and covered with whitewash.

"Pretty well time," he exclaimed, gruffly, as he stepped out. "I say, what did you mean by trying to have me found out?"

"Don't be cross with he, please, sir," pleaded the old woman. "He forgets, you know."

Tom glanced from one to the other, and then, feeling that it would be absurd to complain, he remained silent.

"I did stick up for 'ee, though, master," piped old John; "and if he sends watering-pots full of his old physic, I won't take a drop."

"All right, John," said the young man, for his natural good temper began to reassert itself.

And after waiting for half an hour, he walked slowly back towards the town, but more vexed than he cared to own that he had placed poor Mary in such a position.

"I ought to have faced it all, of course," he muttered. "Pretty thing for him to find out some day, and cast in my teeth. But there, the old folks won't chatter, for they don't like him; and as for his finding it out himself, there's no fear there. I'll be open, though, for the future."

Now, that was a very good resolution on Tom's part, and worthy of every commendation; but as to the doctor's not finding anything out, there he was reckoning without his host, for it happened that, before they had gone more than a mile across the fields on their way homeward, Doctor Smallbois stepped out of the pathway to where a man was at work in a ditch.

"Catch up to you directly, my dear," said the doctor.

And Mary, with trembling heart, she knew not why, walked slowly on.

"Well, Jessop," said the doctor, "how's the rheumatism?"

"Thanky kindly, sir, 'bout gone now."

"Oh! by the way, did any one go across towards John Coulby's before you saw me pass?"

"Nobody 'cept new doctor, sir—Mister Barnard," said the man.

"How long ago was that?" said the doctor, clutching his stick firmly.

"'Bout narf a nour 'fore you went, sir, I sud say."

"Thanky; good day, Jessop. Come to my surgery if you'd like any more stuff for your shoulder."

"Sud like narf a bottle more ile, sir," said the man.

But the doctor was already out of hearing, twirling and brandishing his cane fiercely, till he overtook his daughter, who glanced once with quivering lip at his face.

Ten minutes after they approached the town, and, to Mary's great joy, home was reached without a word being spoken.

CHAPTER XXII.—PREPARATIONS.

NATURE never allows us to trifle with her, and what with headache and conscience chidings, Mr. Jones did not seem the most blissful of mortals at breakfast time; but Tom Barnard's prescription, the gallant behaviour of his friends, who said they would see him through it, and, lastly, the affectionate reception accorded by Mrs. Jones, who was so sorry he had been unwell, and asked Tom

Barnard if he did not think he over-excited himself, all sufficed to recover Mr. Jones, and towards evening he was himself again.

The weather was anything but warm; but, all the same, it had been a hot day at the house of Dr. Smallbois. Judging from old experience, the doctor had thought it advisable to make himself an absentee. He had returned once in a towering passion, for he had encountered his fellow practitioner, Curtis, who made a communication which evoked the following words—

"Never mind! Would not let you see her, eh? Now, look here, Curtis, I've said you shall have her, and have her you shall. Drop in to-night, and have a glass of wine with me, for I'm in a hurry now."

They shook hands and parted, the doctor returning home, to bang the doors and flourish about; but no one took any notice then, and Mrs. Smallbois was not in a state for fencing, with that dinner on her mind; so he put it off for a time, and issued forth, bland, fat, and smiling, as if he had not a care upon his soul.

Poor little Mary had heard him, though, and trembled; for she had overheard his words twice that day—the doctor being given to thinking aloud—and she shuddered as she thought of troubles to come—troubles which she knew to be impending. Twice she was on the point of speaking to her mother, and once she was for writing to beg Mr. Barnard not to come; but evening arrived, and she had done neither.

In fact, it was dangerous to approach Mrs. Smallbois on dinner-party days; and that day in particular she had spent in "flying at" the servants. She was always of the opinion that they "wanted her to them"—her own words—and, as a good mistress, she tried to supply that want, by descending to the nether regions at all sorts of unexpected times. As to followers, there was not a maid who dared even to have her cousin upon the premises; for, so sure as the "young man" did obtain entrance, Mrs. Smallbois must have smelt him, or else known of his presence by some strange affinity, which caused her to feel that she was wanted, to form one in a tableau of shamefaced lover, weeping maid, and furious mistress. Wanted, too, Mrs. Smallbois used to consider herself, late at night in kitchen cupboards and drawers, and many was the amatory or hunger-driven black beetle that came to an untimely end beneath her broad foot. Strange discoveries, too, she would make in recesses that should have been devoted to dusters, or knives and forks, such as well-read weekly numbers, golden cream for the hair, looking-glasses, cosmetiques, pads, face-powder, half-worn chignons, and fancy embroidery—principally black worsted stockings in a state of darning. Little cared she for the fate of hero or heroine, although her daughters condescended to change magazines with the maidens; and at last, to escape the flames, everything in the shape of a book had to be kept for safety squeezed flat in the big fish-kettle that never was used.

Mrs. Doctor meant business that night, and she had not studied expense; for, as she said, what were a few pounds when you were settling two or three girls for life? There was no Mrs. Scaldier here, and

everything was well up to the mark, ready for placing upon the table. The preparations, too, were magnificent—best sperm candles, new dinner service—mustard and white, bought on credit at the new china shop: young married folks, where the doctor *might* be called in—best knives and forks, ditto table linen, the whole of the plate, with a small tub and tea cloths in the surgery ready for washing up as it was used. In short everything was perfection.

CHAPTER XXIII.—A HAPPY MEETING.

THE hour was at hand, and Mrs. Doctor sat in the unchintzed drawing-room, with a face as red as her flame-coloured moiré, trimmed with swansdown; for she had helped a little in the cooking, and the preparations had been very exciting. But now she was cooling herself with her fan, and listening for the sound of coming wheels.

"Gracious child, you look like a little ghost!" she exclaimed, as, all in white, Mary crept into the room.

"Oh! mamma, dear," said Mary, trembling, "may I say a few words to you?"

"Is there anything wrong with the dinner?" said mamma, severely.

"No," said Mary, gently.

"Then I won't hear a word till to-morrow—no, not a syllable. Hush! There, go and sit down—I've other things to think about."

Mary essayed to speak once more, only feebly though, when she was silenced; and in a state of nervous excitement, she cowered on one of the settees, with her hands clasped in almost an agony of dread.

"Let me see," mused Mrs. Doctor, as she made her three rings twinkle—one diamond, two paste, the former being much the smallest; and, strangely enough, the only one that would come off when they were admired. "Let me see: first course—no, soup first—oxtail—I hope that creature won't let it burn. It did taste good."

Here the lady drew forth her highly-scented cambric, and wiped her lips, lest any might have stayed thereon.

"Brill and smelts. Now I wonder what became of that other smelt—the cat, of course! Four entrées: cutlets, rissoles, mashed potatoes, and greens. Well, p'raps those two last are rather—but there, I'm not pretending to give a Lord Mayor's Show-feast dinner. Saddle-o'-mutton, tongue and chickens: six shillings a couple—I declare it's disgraceful. But some one must carve for me, or I'm safe to splatter that white sauce over everybody."

"Mr. Barnard!" shouted the hired waiter, announcing the first guest; and, quiet and gentlemanly, Tom entered the room, making his plunge, as he called it, to get out of his misery.

"Very glad to see you, Mr. Barnard, I'm sure," said Mrs. Doctor, beaming wonderfully; "and I hope this is to be the beginning of a long, friendly feeling, while it's the end of all professional—there, bless my soul, don't mind me; there's a smell of burning, and I know it's that soup."

The burning smell there certainly was, and she hurried out, leaving Tom face to face with Mary; and the next moment her little hands were in his.

"I never hoped to have such a pleasure as this,"

he said, deeply, as he gazed in the bright, agitated little face.

"Don't think me forward, please Mr. Barnard," stammered Mary; "but you must not stop. I've tried to tell mamma, and she would not listen. Papa—papa must have learned that you were hidden at the cottage yesterday; and then last night he was called up—a practical joke—and he thinks it was you."

"Indeed it was not," cried Tom, earnestly.

"No; you're quite right," said Mrs. Doctor, bustling in, "it was not the soup. Here's some one else come."

"Mr. and Mrs. Jones and the Misses Smallbois," cried the waiter; and then the fresh greetings put an end to all further confidence.

Mr. Potter looked rather hard at his friend Jones, when he entered; for he had just awakened to the recollection that in his wild mood Jones had dragged at the bell of this very mansion, and then sent Dr. Smallbois, his own father-in-law, upon a fictitious errand; but after all it was dark, and the doctor would never suspect him; so, in the greetings which followed their entrance, the little affair was forgotten.

Mrs. Doctor had to make excuses for her husband's absence.

"You see, the doctor has so many calls," said Mrs. Doctor, "and he is worked to death. I want him to keep an assistant or to take a partner; but it is of no use to try and persuade him."

Tom Barnard heard those words, and wondered whether time might bring forth some such arrangement, but the next moment he was thinking upon Mrs. Doctor's further remarks.

"He does not mind the work, Jones dear; but only think: some dreadful wretch came and rang him up last night, and sent him to poor Mrs. Bolly's, and frightened her into being ill."

Jones looked the picture of innocence.

"And some one played a trick on her the other day, too, and made her quite nervous; but the doctor says she will get over it."

Mr. Askew slightly puffed out his cheeks here; but he was directly after called upon to take one of the ladies down; and in his attentions to the fair Grace, all else was forgotten.

"Bless you, my darlings!" said the match-making mamma, as, after a most successful dinner, she accompanied her daughters to the drawing-room, leaving the gentlemen over their wine.

For it was all going on capitally—nothing could be better—three husbands were safely netted—two quite catches; and as for the other—well, it was only for poor Mary, and the doctor must take Mr. Barnard into partnership—for that old Curtis should never have her, she was determined. Had he not once said that she was a "fat, meddling old idiot," because she once prescribed for a patient in the doctor's absence, and made the said patient rather worse.

"Bless you, my darlings!" she exclaimed affectionately, and directly after: "Here's papa!" for the wheels of the doctor's brougham were heard. "He'll be so glad, my dears."

The wheels were heard also in the dining-room, where Jones irreverently said—

"Have another glass round, boys. Here's the old buffer coming, and he'll want to put the decanters away. Let's see, Potter—Askew, you have not met him yet?"

"No," said Askew, somewhat nervously—"great pleasure, though."

A curious feeling of excitement began to pervade Tom Barnard, too; for now came in all their force poor little Mary's words.

"There'll be a row, safe," thought Tom. "I wish the old lady was downstairs!"

Meanwhile the doctor, who had picked up Mr. Curtis, was busily throwing off hat, coat, and gloves, moved more by a desire to gratify his hunger than to meet his wife's guests.

"This way, Curtis," he said to his companion.

And then, turning the handle of the dining-room door, he stood, petrified, in the presence of his fellow-travellers down to Duxton—of the men who had grossly insulted him, and called him "Quack"—who had bespattered him with mud, sneered at him, who had driven almost into his carriage; the man, too, who had tried to rob him of his patients, who had sneaked away from him into a cupboard, after clandestine interviews with his daughter, whom he had designed for another, and who, to make matters worse, had tricked him, called him up in the night, and then lurked about the street to laugh at him. It was unbearable.

At first the doctor was speechless with astonishment—speechless, as his guests, who had risen upon his entrance: he swelled visibly; the veins in his forehead rose, and he turned so purple in the face that Tom Barnard's hand went involuntarily to his pocket in search of a lancet, as if dreading apoplexy.

The act was seen by the doctor, and added fuel to the fire. Jones was at the bottom of it, and had banded them altogether to insult him. To him then he turned.

"Mr. Jones, sir," he gasped, "what do you mean by this? Sit down, Curtis—sit down, till I've cleared the room."

"There's some mistake here," growled Mr. Potter. "Is this person Doctor Smallbois?"

"Yes, sir," gasped the doctor, "this person is Doctor Smallbois, sir; and, pray, what have you to say to that?"

"Nothing at all," said Potter, gruffly.

"Perhaps this short, stout gentleman may have some explanation to give?"

Mr. Askew started as he heard those appellations—"short, stout," but he remembered by whose side he had been seated; and, choking down his choler, he said, with as much dignity as could be evolved from his small person—

"No, sir; none at all. It's all a mistake—respective positions—gentlemen, sir—unfortunate encounters."

Here Mr. Askew began to struggle with his dress coat, buttoning it tightly across his chest, and searching in the pockets as if he there expected to find hat and gloves.

"This is not the first time you have grossly insulted me, sir," said the doctor, overturning a chair

in his rage, as he stamped about. "Leave my house this instant. As for you—you miscreant, you—you pretender," gasped the doctor, turning to Tom Barnard, "your audacity is beyond all bounds. There,



be off—you and your precious friends, or I shall be compelled to kick——"

Mr. Askew had made up his mind to bear everything for the sake of the ladies; so had Potter; so had Tom Barnard; but then, Mr. Askew had a temper, and this last word was like the spark which starts a train of gunpowder.

"Wh—wh—wh—wh—wh—what, sir?" he stutted. "Ki—ki—ki—kick me out, sir? If it were not for your grey hairs, I'd—I'd—I'd pull your nose, sir."

And, as he spoke, Mr. Askew twisted off an imaginary nasal organ, dashed it upon the ground, and stamped upon it.



"Here, come along," growled Mr. Potter, whose voice was now so deep that it seemed to be coming out of his boots. "Here—Barnard—Skewy—let's go."

"What's all the row about?" said Jones, who seemed to be quite confused.

"Row, sir?" cried the doctor. "This is partly your doing, and you've brought these fellows to insult me."



"Here, I can't stand much more of this," cried Mr. Potter. "Here, stand aside, you bald-headed, grinning old gorilla!"

And he nearly upset the unfortunate Mr. Curtis, who had been standing laughing and rubbing his hands at his rival's discomfiture; and then, amidst a perfect Babel of ejaculations and threats, the dining-room door was opened, and the sounds, previously taken for those of good fellowship, ascended to the drawing-room, as the gentlemen began to seize hats and coats,



"Jobson! here, Jobson!" shouted the doctor to the hired waiter. "Here! quick! fetch the police; this scoundrel is stealing my coat!"

"Confound your coat, sir!" roared Mr. Potter,

who was now thoroughly roused at being called a scoundrel, for taking the doctor's coat by mistake—hardly taking it, for though he had both arms in the sleeves, it was Tom Barnard who had inadvertently held the garment up for him to put on.



Furious with anger, he snatched it off, and the next moment the doctor was struggling like a large baby under a quilt, for the coat had been thrown completely over his head.

"What is the matter?" cried Mrs. Smallbois.

And then, leaving her daughters to tremblingly gaze over the balustrade, she descended to the scene of strife.

"Gross insults—disgraceful!" cried the doctor. "Open the door, Jobson."

"Never mind; I'll stand by you, my boys," said Jones, stoutly; for he saw that he had his mother-



in-law upon his side. "Here, Saph, put on your things."

"Jobson, keep that door shut," cried Mrs. Doctor.

"And I say, let it be open!" shouted the doctor.

"Do you think I want the High-street to know that this house is turned into a lunatic asylum?" cried Mrs. Doctor.

It is grievous to have to place it upon record, as



relating to an eminent member of the medical profession—grey, aged, and one whose opinion people respected—but none the less it must be related, that Doctor Smallbois made use of a word that made the ladies shriek, it was so strong. Then Mrs. Doctor apologized, while the doctor fumed, entering the dining-room at last with his friend Curtis, and banging the door after them, when a constrained silence ensued, in the midst of which the friends departed for the more hospitable shades of Richmond Villa.



CHAPTER XXIV.—"IN LOVE OR WAR."

A COUPLE of months had glided away, during which the landlady of the County Arms and her faithful squire Charles had been almost constantly gladdened by the presence of the two

friends. For Potter and Askew had vowed that they would never give up their quest; and though they had taken many years to light, now that they had caught, their flame burned strongly. Tom Barnard made no vow, but he had come to the conclusion that without Mary he could not be happy, and joining his friends, heart and soul, a regular siege of the doctor's premises was kept up.

Mrs. Doctor declared herself neutral; but if she did not wink at some of the proceedings, they must have taken place during such time as her eyes were closed.

There were plots and plans without the camp, and plots and plans within; the one party bribed the maids not to carry the letters, the others bribed higher to get them carried. Neighbours found that their back gardens had been invaded—probably by mistake, for footmarks were seen on flower beds, loose bricks were dislodged from the tops of walls, fragments of wearing apparel were discovered in gooseberry bushes, and after an alarming crash heard one night, almost the whole of the glass in a cucumber frame was found to have been demolished.

"There's no letter from those girls again, this morning," said Mrs. Smallbois to her husband, as they sat together in the dining-room.

"Don't want any money," said the doctor, gruffly.

"Now, how much longer is this farce to be kept up?" said Mrs. Smallbois. "I'm sure it's quite time it was at an end. Their visit's been long enough now in all conscience."

The doctor grunted, and held his peace, for he had of late been thinking that he had not acted wisely in rejecting suitors with comfortable incomes of their own.

"Well, what is it, Betsy?" said Mrs. Smallbois, impatiently, as a maid entered the room.

"If you please, 'm, you're wanted," said Betsy.

Betsy looked so exceedingly mysterious and telegraphic, that her mistress rose and followed her out of the room.

"They've been and found 'em out, 'm."

"Found what out? Who has found? What do you mean, girl?"

"They've been and found 'em out, 'm, and they're all in the little room."

Mrs. Smallbois trembled as she rustled by the maid, and laid her hand upon the brass knob of the door which contained the mystery, while Betsy, more round of mouth than ever, looked on.

What a sight greeted her maternal eyes! Her children paired! Potter, the ponderous, supporting Bella; Askew, short, but defiant, looking quite melodramatic, with Grace, to whose well-chiselled nose he held a bottle of smelling-salts; while, trembling, pale, and agitated, little Mary clung tearfully to Tom Barnard's arm.

"Good gracious!" cried Mrs. Smallbois, "what does this mean?"

But the doctor's hand was already upon the fastening, and he entered, to stand the monarch of all he surveyed, for his presence did cause a tremor.

"Why, what the—"

"Hush, sir, pray," exclaimed Mr. Askew, imploringly. "Remember the ladies!"

"Were you speaking to me, sir?" said the doctor,

sarcastically, for one of Mr. Askew's eyes was directed at the window.

"I did venture to make a remark," said Mr. Askew, humbly. "And now, sir, in asking your pardon for *all* that is passed, I am sure I am speaking the feelings of my friends."

"Feelings of my two friends," said Mr. Askew, again.

"Yes; decidedly," said Mr. Potter.

"Quite so," said Tom Barnard.

The doctor stood silent for quite a minute, thinking whether he should go into a towering passion, or take the injured rôle. He decided upon the latter.

"Go away!" said the doctor. "And you—girls—my children no longer—leave this house, and your mother and I will try to bear this stroke to our roof-tree."

"If you please, sir, here's Mr. and Mrs. Jones," said Betsy.

The doctor would not give in yet for a few moments, but stood sternly classic, wondering how would be the best way to come down from his pedestal without compromising his dignity, when he recalled the orthodox plan, and drawing out his pocket-handkerchief, squeezed out two tears, blew his nose very loudly, shook his head, buried his face in the said handkerchief, and then sank into a chair, where he allowed himself to be embraced, and to have his hands shaken, ending by blessing all in true patriarchal style, but without the affecting scene having any other effect upon Jones than to make him wink at his mother-in-law, and whisper in her ear—

"Now, old girl, I hope you are happy!"

THE END.

Another Winter's Tale.

I.



H, stuff! Don't tell me! I say, you don't get such Christmases now as you did when I was a boy. I ought to know: I've seen seventy of 'em—not that I recollect much about number one, though they do say I was a wonderful child to take notice. I don't care what you say it is—drainage, or change of season, or getting nearer to the

sun. It may be one or all of them, if you like; all

I say is, you don't get such Christmases now as you did when I was a boy. And I'm sorry for it; for though the cold does freeze up some of the out-door works, it has such an influence on the inner part of a human being's watchworks that—there, you never knew the man who was ungenerous or uncharitable on a nipping, snowy, clear, frosty Christmas time; while as to what that same human being is in what people call a green Christmas—well, what can you expect? Who's to feel generous, and blithe, and gay, and ready to stuff his hand into his trousers—they were breeches in my days—pocket, and draw out the first coin that comes, and give it with a hearty "God bless you!" when his nose says pocket-handkerchief five hundred and fifty-five times an hour; when there's a rheumatic pain in your right shoulder, and a twitch in your left; when the ground's greasy, the wind wheezy, and the mists that roll up out of the sodden fields looking as sneezy as the dripping trees and hedges suggest tears, crying, and lamentation for the good old times? Why, when Christmas comes like that, hang it all, I'd send him back and tell him to call again!

Why, let me see, it must be—well, say between fifty and sixty years since that frosty Christmas, when Cousin Liz was married.

To be sure. I remember it all as well as if it was yesterday, and, God bless my soul—ah, yes—I'm an old, grey-headed man now, and Cousin Liz—Cousin Liz is in heaven; for a dearer, truer woman never had faithful wife and loving mother written upon her gravestone. And there she lies, "*Ætât 73*," as it says on the stone, just four yards off the main path up to Wychelin Church, within sight of the big parlour window of the Manor House, just as she prayed that, as she wasn't married at the dear old house, she might be brought there to be buried.

Ah, that was a year! That was a Christmas! The snow began to fall about a fortnight before Christmas Day, and the next morning it was about a foot deep. Then it turned to freezing. My word, it did freeze! The sky looked all of a steely blue, and of an afternoon, when the sun was going down, the snow wreaths were perfectly glorious with their wonderful colours; and as you went along, the snow chirped and squeaked under your feet; while of a night, when the stars were out, glistening like diamonds on a black velvet sky, you could hear a strange kind of roar, like as of a high wind rushing along miles above the earth, though all below was quite calm.

So it went on for a week, freeze—freeze—freeze; and a fine time it was for the boys. I thought it glorious—there was so much to do. Every morning I was off with bow-legged Billy, our cowman, to break the ice down at the big pond, for the stock in the farm-yard to get a drink, and then have a slide or a skate upon its glistening, steely surface; for as to safety, Billy used to say you might have driven the old waggon "acrost" it anywhere you liked.

Then there was getting in the wood for the Christmas logs, and father gave no end away.

Then there was the getting ready the holly, and ivy, and laurels, and mistletoe, for the decorations at home and at the church, for the house was to be

made full that year because of Lizzy's wedding; for Aunt Deborah—Aunt Deb we always called her—had settled that Lizzy should be married on Christmas Day, because she had been married then herself, and such marriages always turned out lucky.

"And I hope to goodness, Master Tom, as this here one 'll turn out lucky, too," said Davy, our gardener, to me. "Now, mind what you're arter, boy, or you'll fall. Dang it now, Master Tom, what's the good o' chucking down the holly that way? You do that 'eer again, and I'll let go o' the ladder."

"It was quite an accident, Davy," I said, grinning.

"Quite an accident, indeed!" he grumbled. "Now then, hold tight while I move the foot o' the ladder a bit. Are you ready?"

"All right, Davy."

"Theer—now you can reach that there bough up yonder. It's covered wi' berries; hit him a good whack wi' the bill-hook close in to the stem. That's him; that's— There, I never did see such a boy as you. Now, what call had you got to shake all that snow down in a fellow's face?"

"Did I, Davy?" I said, innocently.

"Did yer, indeed!"

Whoosh! Crash!

That noise was made by the great snow-laden bough of holly, which I had lopped off standing at the top of the ladder, and guided so that it fell right upon poor David, who could not get out of the way, for fear the ladder should slip.

"Look at that, now!" he said, in a passion.

"Here, come down. I never see such a young rip. I won't have no more on it—I'll cut it all myself."

I had to beg, and pray, and promise; and at last, on the promise of no end of good behaviour, the work progressed, Davy holding the ladder while I lopped off branch after branch of ruddy-berried holly, black-berried ivy, and long, glistening-leaved boughs of laurel, in the shrubberies and copse.

"We'll have a good show this time, Master Tom," said Davy. "And I'll tell yer what, we'll get Billy up to help carry it into the church, for there's snow coming afore long, and if it does, there'll be a heap."

"It's too soon to take it there yet," I said.

"Too soon! Why, to-day's Monday, Master Tom, and the young ladies 'll want to begin to-morrer. The idea, though—I can hardly believe it. Miss Lizzy going to be married on Christmas Day! Well, I wish her joy; but if I was a gal, afore I'd marry such a weak-looking, spindle-shanked little man as Mister Snell, I'd go without a husband. Now, if it had been Master Harry Forrests', there'd be something in it."

"What's the good of talking stuff, Davy? Harry Forrests' going to marry sister Tag—Miss Agnes, I mean," I added, with dignity.

"No—is he?" said Davy, in his wheedling way.

"Not he, Master Tom."

"He is, though," I said. "I say, Davy, I saw him kiss her in the porch, last night, when he was going."

"Nonsense, Master Tom—nonsense."

"He did, I tell you."

"He—he—he! Ho—ho—ho!" chuckled Davy.

"Well, they will, you know, they will. I used to when I was a youngster. But, as to Miss Lizzy a-choos-

ing o' that Master Snell, the Lor' ha' mussy; why, it 'd take two o' he to make one good man."

"Hist, Davy!" I said, "he's coming up the path."

Davy fetched himself a slap on the mouth.

"Here's Harry Forrest coming with him," I whispered. "Here, quick, Davy, make me a whacking great snowball, and pitch it up—I'll give old Snell such a one-er."

"No, no, Master Tom, you marnt," whispered Davy.

But, all the same, he began to grin, and, stooping down, he made me a good, big, hard snowball, and pitched it up, so that I caught it where I stood, twenty feet above the ground, holding on by a branch, and having a good view of the lane just the other side of the fence, along which came Philip Snell—a thin, mean-looking little fellow, with very fair hair and eyebrows, and a mincing step. He was muffled up to the eyes in wrapper and comforter, so that he looked like a walking great-coat, with a very bad shiny hat on the top; while, beside him, in his brown velveteen shooting-jacket, gaiters, and wide-awake, came along Harry Forrest, the very *beau ideal* of a ruddy, frank, hearty young Englishman, whose eyes glistened, while his curly brown whiskers were covered with rime frost.

He was talking in a hearty way, while Snell answered from under his comforter, when, whish! went my snowball, just as they came below me, and with so good an aim that it fell with a thud on Snell's shiny hat, dinting it in, and as it knocked it off into the snow it rolled over and down amongst the bushes in the ditch.

"Hallo! who's that?" cried Harry Forrest. "That's Tom, I'll swear."

And, stooping down, he began to make a snowball, while I remained perfectly still; but glancing down, I saw Davy grinning up at me, and ready to pitch me another ball.

He did, and I caught it just ready to see Snell come into sight again, brushing the snow off his hat, and looking vicious enough to eat me.

"I shall complain to your father about this, Master Tom," he said, in a whining, angry voice. "It's enough to give a man his death of—"

Whop!

My second snowball caught him right in the ear, and broke, matting up his hair, and running in spray down inside his comforter; and he ran off as hard as he could go towards the house, while I burst out into a roar of laughter, holding on tightly to keep from falling, while Harry Forrest pelted me till I cried off.

"Don't, don't, Harry. I can't hold on for laughing. I shall—"

Bang! crash!

I lost my hold, and came sliding down amongst the bushes with a rush, falling on Davy, but not until my progress had been checked by the boughs.

In a moment Harry was over the fence, and helping me up.

"My dear Tom," he exclaimed, "are you hurt?"

"I don't know," I said, getting up, and shaking myself. "Are you, Davy?"

"Am I?" he growled. "Why, you've 'most broke

my neck, lumping down on me, and my face is scratched awful."

He was grinning, though, and so was I the next moment, when I heard the side door bang, and Davy began to be very industrious, gathering the branches, as my father, a tall, middle-aged man, came down towards where we were.

"Here, you Tom," he said, "if you snowball Mr. Snell any more I shall have to horsewhip you."

"But you aint going to this time, father?"

"Not this time, my boy," he said, trying to look stern.

"But did he come and tell you, father?" I asked.

"Of course he did, boy."

"What a sneak!" I said.

My father pretended not to hear it; and Davy grinned and winked, while his master was shaking hands with Harry; and then they turned towards the house.

"Oh, don't go away," Harry, I shouted—"stop and help. We're going to take some of it to the church."

He waved his hand; and at the end of a quarter of an hour, when there was enough cut, I saw the door open, and he came back, with sister Tag looking so happy and rosy in her hood, while Cousin Liz came behind, pale and waxen-looking, but very beautiful, with that wretched fellow Snell by her side.

Of course I began snowballing Harry and sister Tag, and they replied; and in utter disgust Snell began to retreat, wanting Lizzy to go with him; and then Aunt Deborah came out for a walk on the beaten snow in the sunshine, and then it seemed to begin to morally freeze, for the snowballing stopped, though I should have dearly liked to plant one in the middle of her back. I did gently drop one in her hood, as it hung down; while, Billy being called up from the yard, I was soon as busy as the rest getting the snowy green stuff up to the house and across the churchyard, filling the porch, and taking some in to the parson's, where I had a glass of hot elder wine and a lump of cake for my pains, and Davy and Billy a mug each of the parson's home-brewed ale.

II.

THAT night, while the great log was blazing in the broad chimney, and gilding every piece of furniture in the room with its ruddy glow, I sat watching them all for a time, and began to think seriously of how things were going to be.

Mr. Wilby, our grey old parson, and Mrs. Wilby were there, playing whist with father and Aunt Deborah, who came to live with us and kept house when my poor mother died; and somehow my father always gave up to her in everything.

She was a stiff, starchy old lady, in a widow's cap, and as a boy I used to think she had starched her neck; for she never used to bend it, but used to turn all round at once every now and then to look across at Cousin Lizzy—who came with her, and had been like a sister to Tag and me ever since—and frown or smile, as the case might be; for Lizzy was playing chess with Snell, and kept her eyes bent on the board, his being more often fixed on her.

As for Harry Forrest, he was playing at back-

gammon with sister Tag; and they looked as happy as could be there in the far corner, with only one candle on the little table; and I kept seeing them pass the dice cup backwards and forwards. There were two, but they liked to play with only one, and it took such a long time to pass it from one to the other, just as if their fingers got entangled, and then Tag used to look up at Harry, and then look down again and blush. If she didn't, it must have been the fire shone on her very warmly just then.

I was getting fidgety, for I seemed left out in the cold, when I was called to attention.

"Don't sniff, Tom," said Aunt Deborah.

I pulled out my pocket handkerchief, and tried to blow my nose like my father, when Aunt Deborah turned round and looked daggers at me.

"Your play, Mrs. Burnham," said the parson.

And my aunt, whose attention had been called off, played in a hurry, played wrong, lost the odd trick, and looked swords at me now, to Snell's great delight, for I saw the wretch smile.

"I'll serve you out for this," I muttered to myself; and soon after I did it inadvertently, for I began watching the game, and saw such a bad move made that I said, excitedly—

"Oh, you were a muff, Mr. Snell! Why didn't you bring up your queen?"

"Tom!" exclaimed Aunt Deborah.

"But it would have been mate, aunt," I remonstrated.

"If you cannot sit still and look on, Tom, you will have to be sent off to bed," said my aunt.

Snell looked at me, with his thin lips pressed together, as if he would have liked to bite me; but I didn't care much, for Harry Forrest gave me a sly look, and I saw him squeeze Tag's hand, and she looked up at me and smiled.

By-and-by, after looking at the fire till I could resist the temptation no longer, for the log of wood looked full of soldiers, I got softly hold of the poker, and gave the log a bang, when the sparks flew up the chimney like twenty squibs let off all at once, to my great delight.

"Put down that poker, this instant, Tom!" cried my aunt.

And I retreated behind Cousin Lizzy, and began to watch her sweet, sad face, and wonder why she did not smile as she used. And then it seemed to come upon me, like a kind of revelation, that she must still be very fond of poor Jack Frost, our parson's nephew; and I remembered now that she used to be a good deal with him when he was staying at the vicarage; and then I began to stare at the fire, and to try and recall his face, and his nice frank, handsome look, in his uniform, when he came to bid us all good-bye; and, of course, I went into the little room, and saw him holding Lizzy in his arms, and went out again without being seen.

Then, I remembered, too, all about how the ship Jack Frost was in sailed from Plymouth, and was never heard of again; and, as far as I could make out, it was four years ago, if it was not five.

Just while I was thinking of all this, Sally came in to say that supper was ready; and father took Mrs. Wilby into the dining-room, while parson patted my head as he went by with Aunt Deborah.

Then Harry went next, with sister Tag; and as he was going I pulled his sleeve, and pointed to a piece of mistletoe I had hung over the door; and he took the hint, and Tag didn't shrink away a bit, for I'm sure she let him take a kiss off the rosy part of her cheek.

Next came Snell, smiling, with poor Lizzy, and he did the same, putting his arm round her, and kissing her.

She didn't shrink away neither, but stood quite still, and I heard him whisper "My darling!" and felt as if I should like to kick him; and then I was left alone.

"Might have asked me to come to supper to-night as it's so near Christmas!" I said. "Never mind. I'll go and ask old Sally to give me a tart. I'll kiss her under the mistletoe."

I was just going, when Lizzy darted back into the room, not seeing me, and threw herself on a chair, crying and sobbing as if her heart would break.

I was ready to cry too, as I went up to her.

"Oh, don't cry, Liz," I said, putting my arm round her.

And she broke out into a fresh burst of sobs, as she flung her arms round me, and hid her face on my shoulder.

"Oh, Tom, Tom, Tom!" she wailed, "I pray to Heaven you may never be so unhappy as I am."

"I know what it is," I said, angrily—"it's because that beast tried to kiss you. I wish I'd knocked his head off this afternoon."

"Hush, Tom!" she said, wiping her eyes hastily.

"You must not speak so. Mr. Snell is going to be my husband."

She glided away like a ghost, and I stood there thinking to myself.

"He's a nasty, cold, icy wretch," I said to myself. "I know what I should do, if I was Liz, when I was married. I should always take two bottles of hot water to bed with me, for he'll be cold as an eel."

Just then I started for the kitchen, when I was waylaid by Harry Forrest.

"Come on, Tom," he whispered—"I've coaxed your aunt over. Come in to supper."

"Oh, I say, Harry Forrest, you are a good one," I said; and as I followed him, it was with a longing hope that I might grow up such a man as he.

I didn't enjoy that supper, though, for Lizzy looked so wretched, and Snell sat opposite to me, and I could see the two nasty red pimples on one side of his nose, and they aggravated me; while there was Aunt Deborah calling him "Dear Philip," and begging he would make a good supper, till I bit at my bread viciously, and said to myself—

"Ah! she wouldn't be so fond of him if he hadn't got two thousand a year. If I was Liz, I wouldn't have him if he was made of gold."

III.

THAT night, when I went to bed, I went to the window, and could see that it was snowing very fast; and in the morning I found that it was still snowing—not a gentle falling of great flakes, but a rush of snow that was borne on the wings of a hurricane, filling up the porch, nestling in the corners of the windows, and bearing down the branches of the

evergreens. Under the front door it was filtering in like a fine white powder, and the same at the key-hole; while on going into the dining-room, it was to find that looking quite dim, the snow was so piled-up on the window-sill and on the leadwork of the lattice panes.

"Isn't it jolly, Tag!" I said to her, as she came down to make the tea.

"No, it isn't," she replied pettishly; "it's cold and doleful, and everybody's miserable, and—"

What else I never knew, for Tag began to cry, and I saw a tear fall into the sugar-basin, and then in the tea-caddy, while how many went into the bread and butter I cannot say.

I set it down to a quarrel with Harry Forrest after I had gone to bed, but soon found that this was not the case; for it was on account of poor Lizzy, who—now that the time of her wedding was drawing so near—seemed to grow more and more melancholy.

That morning I overheard a little bit of conversation between my father and Aunt Deborah, while I was sitting behind the curtain in the big bay window, munching a lump of cake—for it was quite eleven o'clock, and I had had nothing since breakfast.

"Deborah," said my father, "I don't quite like the look of Lizzy. Are you sure you are right in letting this marriage come off?"

"My dear John," said Aunt Deborah, with austerity; and as she spoke she began to arrange a horrible brooch she always wore, one made out of a bit of pink faded coral—just the rough little branch set in gold—and always looking to me like a piece of a dead worm, found drowned after a storm on the gravel—"my dear John, you are an excellent farmer, and the best judge of stock in the country, but your management of children is beneath contempt."

"Thanky," said my father.

"If I had not come here to take the management of your house, I don't know what would have become of your children."

"You've been very kind, I'm sure, Deborah, and done your best," said my father, smiling; for I could see him through a little hole in the curtain.

"I have, John," said my aunt, complacently; "but that boy, Tom, is getting quite beyond me."

"I was not talking about Tom," said my father, "but about Lizzy."

"Surely, John, I think you may allow me to manage my own affairs myself. I gave way to you about Agnes, and her engagement to that rather rough young man, Mr. Forrest."

"As fine a young fellow as ever stepped!" said my father, warmly.

"Ye-e-es," said my aunt, playing with her brooch, "but wanting in refinement."

"Refinement be—"

"John!"

"I beg your pardon, Deborah; but you irritate me," said my father. "The young fellow loves my girl, and she loves him. They are pretty well off, and what more do you want?"

"Oh, nothing," said my aunt, "only to be left to govern my own child, and to see that she does not make such a *mésalliance*."

"Misalliance," said my father, making plain

English of the word—"well, I like that. Why, your Mr. Snell—"

"Hush, I beg you will not insult Mr. Snell in my presence," said my aunt. "He is wealthy and refined, and I consider him a suitable match for my child, whom he adores."

"So he ought," said my father, hotly; "but she don't care twopence for him."

"My daughter has been properly trained, and knows what is her duty," said my aunt, austere. "She is like all girls should be, very diffident and modest before her intended husband."

"Humph! that's as good as saying 'Tag is not,' said my father.

"I say nothing of the kind, John," said my aunt, speaking with provoking coolness. "If you have called me in here to quarrel, pray say so, and I'll leave the room."

"Now, what's the use of getting in a temper, Deborah?" said my father. "I only spoke to you on behalf of your own child, so as to try and induce you to act for the best."

"Oh, I've thought of all this," said my aunt, with a chilling smile. "I do not act at random, John."

"But do you think it is for the best?"

"There, there, there," said my aunt; "I'll hear no more about it. You foolish man! how little you know about women and their ways!"

"I suppose I don't know much," said my father to himself, as he took down a pipe, and began to smoke, filling it from the little, old-fashioned, leaden tobacco-case that stood on the sideboard; for my aunt had sailed out of the room.

But he had not been smoking five minutes, keeping me still a prisoner, for I did not like to show myself, when who should come in but Lizzy, looking very pensive and quiet, when my father jumped up and caught her hands.

"Lizzy, my girl," he said, "I wanted to say a word to you about this wedding."

"Yes, uncle dear," she said, sighing as he drew her to his breast, and she nestled her head against his cheek.

"I'm not quite satisfied about it, my girl. I'm afraid—I'm—I'm—well, there, hang it, I must speak out. I'm afraid you are not very fond of this Mr. Snell."

"I shall try to be a dutiful wife to him, uncle," said Lizzie, sadly.

"Hang it! yes, girl; but then men don't want dutiful wives. No, no; I don't mean that, for of course they do. What I mean is, I don't think you care for him as you ought."

"I try to, uncle, dear."

"Yes, yes, my pretty," he said, kissing her affectionately; "but that's not all. You're a good girl, Lizzy, and I want to see you happy."

"I know, I know, uncle, dear; and—and—I wish—oh, what shall I do?—what shall I say?" she cried, bursting into a passion of tears, and sobbing ready to break her heart, while my father kissed her and soothed her, and tried all he could to make her calm.

"There!" he exclaimed, at last, "I won't have it—the wedding sha'n't come off."

"Oh, hush, uncle!" she cried, hastily drying her tears. "Don't say that—don't notice me! I'm a

foolish, ungrateful girl, that's all, and mamma knows best."

"I don't know so much about that," grumbled my father.

"Oh, yes, yes, yes!" cried Lizzy, smiling in quite a piteous way, as she tried to look cheerful. "I've been very foolish, uncle, dear; and it's all for the best."

"Look here, Lizzy, my girl," said father. "You tell me flat and straight out that you don't want to marry Mr. Snell, and the wedding sha'n't come off."

"Oh, no, no, uncle, dear, I musn't say that," she cried, hastily. "I've been low and nervous, that's all. You must not say a word. Mamma knows best, and—hush! here's Mr. Forrest."

She darted away, as Harry Forrest was seen coming by the window, and, glancing in, he saluted my father with a cheery "Yoicks."

"Yoicks," I cried, starting up. "Harry! snow-balls!"

"Why, you young dog," said my father, catching me by the collar, "why, you've been hiding there and listening."

"I couldn't help hearing," I said, in an injured tone. "I was in the room first, and you and Aunt Deborah and Lizzie came and talked."

"What were you doing there, sir?"

"Eating cake," I replied.

And I believe I should have had a severe box on the ears but for the entrance of Harry Forrest, who came in after a deal of kicking and brushing the snow from his boots.

"Snow still, Harry?" said my father.

"Coming down tremendously, sir, and means to keep on. I had a fine job to get here; it's up to your middle in places. Snell wouldn't face it, and has gone back."

"Good job, too," said my father; "he'd catch cold."

"Come, Tom," said Harry Forrest, "how about the church? Young ladies going, sir?"

"I suppose so, Harry," said my father. "You'd better ask them."

The result was that we all set off for the church.

I'm afraid I was given to listening in those days. But what could I do, if people came close by me and talked? And so it happened that, while I was busy filling the brass candlesticks on the pulpit with the best sprigs of holly I could find, and Harry Forrest and Tag were twining boughs in and out of the communion rails, Mr. Wilby took Lizzy's hand, that was clasped full of ivy, and said to her, in a low voice—

"Lizzy, my child, it seems to me only the other day I held you in my arms, by the font there that you have filled with greenery, and looked down in your pretty baby face; and now, in a day or two more, I am to stand yonder in the chancel, and make you Mr. Snell's wife. Ah, my darling, I had hoped to see you the wife of poor Jack—God rest him! my poor boy! my poor boy!"

The old man sank into one of the pew seats, covered his face with his hands, and bent down, sobbing like a child; while Lizzy threw herself at his feet, clinging to him, and whispering in a hurried, excited, imploring way—

"Pray, pray don't speak so, Mr. Wilby—dear Mr. Wilby!" she cried. "It is like killing me."

"My poor child!" he said, tenderly. "It is very cruel and thoughtless of me. But you did love Jack?"

"Yes, yes," wailed Lizzy, more than spoke.

And she hid her face on the old man's knees.

"Well, well, well," he said, sadly—"man proposes, but God disposes. My dear child, I hope you will be a happy wife."

Lizzy tried to speak, but failed, and, getting up, she busied herself in finishing the decorations, for we did the best part of them—the way in which those two lovers idled was shameful; and so it came about that at last Cousin Lizzy and I were together busily twining ivy in the iron railings of my lord and my lady's grand tomb in the corner, when I said to Lizzy—

"I say, Liz, don't marry old Snell."

"Tom!" she gasped, staring at me with wonder.

"I say don't have him; never mind Aunt Deborah. I like you ever so much."

"I know you do, Tom," she said, kissing me.

"Well, look here, you wait seven or eight years; they'll soon slip away, and I'll marry you—I will, honour bright."

"You foolish boy!" she said, smiling through her tears.

"Don't laugh," I said, earnestly—"I mean it. You don't suppose I'm always going to be a boy, because I'm going to grow up just like Harry Forrest; and I tell you what, sooner than you shall marry old Snell, I'll run away with you now."

"Tom, Tom, you dear, good, foolish boy," she said, throwing her arms round me, and kissing me; "promise me, for my sake, always to be kind and respectful to Philip Snell, and don't call him old. You know he's only three years older than Harry Forrest."

"Then, what does he cuddle up like an old fogey for?" I said, passionately. "Couldn't even come through the snow to see the lady he's going to marry on Saturday, for fear he should melt or make his nose red. Yah!"

"Tom, dear, you are hurting me. Mr. Snell is going to be my husband, and it will grieve me so much if you talk like this."

"He hates me," I said, spitefully.

"Because you have played him such tricks, Tom."

"Well, I couldn't help it," I said. "As soon as you look at him you feel as if you wanted to stick pins in him—a booby. Don't you, Lizzy?"

"No, no, Tom; and I must beg you to be kind and considerate, and, in return, I promise that I'll make him love you."

"No—don't, please!" I said, ingenuously. "I shouldn't like that. I wonder how you can bear it."

Poor Lizzy shuddered in spite of herself, and a little sob escaped her.

"I'll do what you like, though," I said; and our conversation ended.

While, later on, as Harry Forrest carried her back through the snow, in the dark, I remember thinking that she looked as pale and sad as a little ghost, never once smiling when Harry said how light she was, though he panted under his load; for

the snow was growing deeper and deeper, and I nearly got stuck fast, but thought it the best of fun.

IV.

ALL that night, and all the next day, down came the snow, as I have never seen it fall before or since; and at last we awoke to the fact that we had arrived at Christmas Eve, and the little village was regularly shut in with the snow. Not that it much mattered; for when it had ceased falling, everybody had turned out, with shovel in hand, to literally dig a way from house to house—so deep a trench, in places, that the snow was up to a man's shoulders. Any communication with the town was quite out of the question; but that was not felt to be much of a trouble either, for the village butcher and the grocer had both been well stored for Christmas, and as soon as they had cleared their shop fronts they tried to make a goodly show; but the grocer's was a failure, for the glass in his window was covered at once by the frost flowers, which spread their beauteous crystals over every pane, no matter how goodly a fire was kept up inside.

Father had settled it that Mr. and Mrs. Wilby should come and spend Christmas with us, and there were four relatives besides invited to come to Lizzy's wedding; while, in addition, the old gentleman had arranged with the music people at Hunton Town, and two fiddlers, with a flute player and harp, were engaged to come for the dance we were to have.

Snell found his way to the house, on one of his horses, but not till he had been stuck fast coming; and father laughingly said he had better stop altogether, as the time was so near.

Aunt Deborah was very cross about it, and told father it was indecent; but he laughed, and Snell didn't mind; and then Harry Forrest pretended that he was afraid to go back through the snow, and father said he must stop too, and the house was as full as full, and every one busy and happy—except poor Lizzy; though, in the preparations, scarcely anybody thought about her.

Father was in his glory, just like I was. He nearly drove Aunt Deborah wild by making charges into the kitchen to see if the turkey was properly plucked, and the capons. Then he had to go and see if Sharp, the butcher, had sent in the right piece of sirloin, and enough of it; but Sharp might have been trusted for that, for he was told to send in twenty pounds, and he cut so exactly that it only weighed five pounds nine ounces over.

Then, too, there was the big ale cask to help tap and taste—Harry Forrest helped me do that; Snell never drank ale, because, he said, it gave him the heartburn; the elder wine keg to tap as well, the spirit jars to open, and the big bottle of brandy cherries to taste; while, in addition, what a job Harry and I had to help sister Tag get ready the ten dishes of dessert, and how my conscience chides me to the present day for the quantity of things I stole! For they gave me such chances, Harry was always putting rosy apples up against Tag's cheeks, and pretending that they were not half so rosy; squeezing her hand while he helped arrange russett pears

amongst the laurel leaves, or pile up oranges in golden pyramids. And they were so blind, too! They never seemed to think I could see anything. Just as if I didn't know why they kept their fingers paddling together, out of sight, in the big yellow basin of hot water, pretending to blanch almonds, when the water wouldn't blanch them a bit.

Bad news on Christmas Eve! The post had not been able to get to us, for we were quite cut off; and, worse still, the musicians could not be expected from the town.

"Never mind," said my father, "we can get on without; and as to the post, letters can wait till the thaw—that is, if there are any for us."

And now, preparations having been completed for the feast, people began to think a little more about poor Lizzy, and aunt went about saying to everybody what a good thing it was that Lizzy's wedding dress came home before the snow began to fall. She even said it to me, and I said it was; but she would not let me see it, all the same.

The intention had been for the newly married couple to go off to London on Boxing Day, but father said that was out of the question now, as of course it was.

One little piece of sad news was brought in by Bow-legged Billy that morning; and that was that a poor woman, evidently a tramp, with her baby, had been found dead in the snow just outside the village, and we heard in all their minutiae the whole account of the poor thing's looks—how she was frozen quite stiff, and with her baby huddled close to her breast, but both looking so calm and peaceful, just as if they were asleep.

"Ah," said father, "that was a sad thing. When God knows there was enough and to spare here of shelter, and warmth, and food, for any of His creatures if I had known they wanted it. Mrs. Wilby, Deborah, girls, boys, friends all, good health and happiness, and a merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you all!"

"Amen," said Mr. Wilby.

And we all emptied our glasses, though aunt frowned at me horribly for drinking all mine, till father saw it, and said—

"All right, Deborah; it's only at Christmas-time."

Soon afterwards Lizzy got up, looking paler and more ghost-like than ever; and then Snell, who had been doing nothing but bite his nails and look grumpy, got up and went out too, making aunt smile and nod to Mr. Wilby and our relatives, who nudged one another and smiled too.

"Poor Lizzy!" I said to myself, after sitting facing the fire some time, to find that there was nothing more to eat, and no more to drink, and that nobody took any notice of me—"poor Lizzy! I'll go and talk to her."

I slipped off quietly, after waiting till aunt's eyes were closed tight; for she had been watching me like a cat does a mouse, and if I had moved before, she would have been down upon me, and ordered me back to my chair.

So I watched her, with the warm glow of the fire twinkling in the drowned worm brooch, and seeming to make it writhe, till I saw her head bent gracefully forward in a bow to our relatives on the

opposite side, two of whom were sitting with their mouths wide open; while father, the parson, and Mrs. Wilby all had theirs resting partly on one shoulder or on the back of their chairs, and Harry Forrest and Tag were holding their heads together in the shadow, talking secrets, and looking so bright and rosy and handsome whenever the fire flashed up.

Then aunt's head rose, and she bent it a little to the right, then a little to the left, and then it went down till her chin covered the worm, and she said "Ciss-ss," and I knew it was all right, and stole out on tiptoe, blundering up against Snell in the passage, and making him swear.

"So are you," I said, sharply.

And dodging to avoid a blow I ran off, but returned directly, and went into the best parlour—a big, low-ceiled room, with a jolly fire burning in the big grate, with logs of wood piled up, giving enough light to show me Lizzy, in her white dress, standing in the recess, looking out of the casement at the snow.

I went in on tiptoe, and across the room, to put my arms round her, when, just I as got close up, she began talking in a low, moaning way—

"He says I am cold and cruel, and that I don't love him. Oh, how can I?—how can I?"

I felt quite a start run through me at her words, and was going to speak, when she went on again—

"Poor thing! poor thing! Cold and bitter—a cold, cold bed. A soft, white wedding bed, with a soft, white winding sheet. And the poor little weeny baby! Dead, dead, dead! Poor thing, poor thing! No, no—happy, happy, and free from misery! They said she was smiling. I suppose it would be very easy to lie down there in the snow, and sleep—sleep for ever—away from all this— Ah!"

I had touched her on the shoulder, for her words horrified me; and as I did so she uttered a faint shriek.

"I say, Liz, dear," I said, "what made you talk like that?"

"I was thinking of that poor woman, and of any other poor wanderer that might be lost in the snow."

"Liz," I said, "if you talk like that, I shall go and tell father."

"No, no—no, no!" she cried, clinging to me. "I won't say so again, Tom. It was—it was— Who's that?"

"On'y me, miss," said Sally, our cook, standing in the doorway. "I on'y came to tell Master Tom as Davy and Billy want him pertickler. And, for the Lord's sake, miss, doey let me make you a nice warm posset, you look as if you'd got a ager a-comin'."

"No, no, Sally! I'm quite well. I'm going to get warm, and then go back into the dining-room."

V.

"WHAT do they want, Sally?" I said, as I followed her out into the kitchen, to find, however, that my father had heard voices, and was there before me.

"Here, Tom, run and fetch that mulled wine," he said, "and a glass."

I ran; but I had been able to see Davy and Billy supporting on a chair the figure of a man covered with snow, before the roaring kitchen fire.

I was back in very few minutes, and the poor, fainting fellow drank with avidity the glass of hot wine, which seemed to revive him at once.

"I sank you," he said; then, feebly, "I sank you mosh. I am bettare now."

"But how came you out in the snow?" said my father, who, cloth in hand, was playing the good Samaritan, and helping me to rub off the snow.

"Sare, I start at eight of ze time zis morning, to walk ovaire from ze town to ze house of Monsieur Eldair, who have ze niece got to marry herself."

"Why, that's here," said my father; "but who are you, then?"

"It ees here!" said the stranger, a good-looking, closely shaven Frenchman, with sharp moustache and imperial, and closely cropped hair. "Zen I am up to ze height of my shoy. I 'ave come."

"But you never came through that snow, and on foot?"

"But yais; I fight my vay a-down here, sare. It von bittaire struggil; but I fight and fight all day, till I lay down to myself rest, and zen I vant to go to sleep myself; but I say no, my cher, if you go to sleep yourself in ze snow, you nevaire wake yourself up any more."

"That's true," said my father. "Have another glass of wine."

"Yais, zat ees true; but I take not ze more vin, sare, I 'ave enough. And I tell you I fight my vay on in ze big despaire, all troo ze day, till ze sun go himself down, and I 'ave eat my leetler sanfage and bread piece, and drink my last leettler drop of ze Cognac, and grow myself weaker and weaker, for ze snow vas affreux, and crawl and fight only. But I vill fight on, for I say I see ze smoke of ze house, and ze vite top of ze church, and at last I do no more; for I sink on my *genoux*, and lay and cry, 'Oh mon Dieu, au secours, au secours!' and zen I get up and fight ze way on again, till I can no more, and I fall down in ze snow, and cry help, till ze deux brave garçons come and help me here."

"You've had a narrow escape, my friend," said my father. "It was utter madness to try to come. I could not have believed it possible."

"Yais, it vas not possible; but I must come, sare, and I am come."

"But why?" said my father. "As a visitor? I don't know you."

"Vy I come, sare?" said the stranger, slowly, unbuttoning his coat, and taking out a green baize bag—"I come—aha, you're quite safe, I can feel—zat ees my violin, sare. I find ze harp, and ze flute, and ze violin secondo, zey say zey be condemn afore zey fight across ze snow, and zen I say 'Ze bon père tear his hair ven he go to marry his leetler fille, and zere is no musique to play,' so I say 'I go all alone by self if zey not come;' and zey say I am fool, zose English musician; so I came across by myself, and I am here, sare, and I am a fool—behold me!"

"You're a trump, monsieur; and I'm glad to see you. Welcome to Manor House. Sally, see that there's a comfortable bed got ready for monsieur. Tom, you be butler, and see that he has a good dinner directly—that'll be the best physic for his complaint."

The Frenchman's eyes sparkled, and he pressed

my father's hand affectionately; and then, after a good dry and warm, he made a meal that caused Sally and our other maid to smile; after which I took him to my room, and he preened his feathers, pointed the tips of his moustache with soap, and declared himself all right.

I had a good stare at him, to find him a fine, handsome fellow, but very foreign-looking, and with a skin dark like an Indian's.

Then he had a good rub at his hands, to take the numb feeling out of his fingers; and when we got back to the kitchen he took out and carefully examined his violin, to find it all right, and, tuning it up, he laid it down, and proceeded to smoke a cigarette by the kitchen fire.

I had to go in to tea then, and did so very reluctantly; but I was sent out directly to ask the Frenchman to come in, but he declined.

When, however, we had done, we heard in the kitchen the bright, clear notes of the violin, in a cheery cadenza, and my father jumped up.

"Is the parlour lit up, Sally?" he cried.

"Yes, sir—with twelve candles," cried Sally.

"Your hand, then, Mrs. Wilby, for a country dance. Parson, you'll take my sister. Now, boys, your partners. Tom, fetch in the band."

By the time I had fetched in the band of one they were in their places, and two or three dances followed one another—my aunt dancing, like a dowager in brocade, in the minuet which succeeded the country dance, Lizzy dancing only once, and then excusing herself on the plea of a headache.

Then we had cards, and then supper, and after that the elder wine was brought out, Lizzy taking it round to all the guests, as they wished her a happy wedding.

Poor girl! she carried it round to all, ending with our French musician, whom my father treated with as much consideration as if he had been a lord, in consequence of his brave journey.

I was nearest, and I heard the Frenchman say a few words afterwards in a low tone, and saw Lizzy reel, and drop the glass.

Then there was a sharp rush, and the Frenchman had her in his arms, saying calmly—

"Ze poor miss ees not vell. She has fainted."

"No, no—I am better—better now," cried Lizzy.

And, looking like a ghost, she fled from the room. Sister Tag followed her, and came back in a few minutes, saying that she had gone to bed, and would be better in the morning.

Then my aunt went, and came back smiling, saying that there was nothing wrong; and we soon after all retired, it being my duty to show our musician to his room, and I sat talking to him by his snug fire, which Sally had prepared, for some time. In fact, everybody was gone to bed when I went to mine.

VI.

CHRISTMAS morning, and the sun shining out on the clear, bright snow, over which the birds came to the windows, and flocked in the farm-yard for the corn the cattle let fall and I had sprinkled.

Breakfast was spread, and Harry Forrest was there, ready, in an old-fashioned way, to be best

man. Snell was not yet down; but he came at last, looking blue and cold, and as if sleep had given him the heartburn worse than ever.

"Come, my lad," said my father, giving him a clap on the shoulder, "you must make a good breakfast, and get warm. Why, you look as if you were going to a funeral. Eh, what?—what's the matter, Sally?"

"Oh, sir—oh, sir!" wailed Sally, "poor Miss Lizzy!"

"For God's sake, speak, woman! What is it?" cried my father.

"Miss Lizzy, sir—Miss Lizzy! She's dead!"

There was a rush upstairs, where, on the landing, we found my aunt, Tag, and the two maids at Lizzy's door.

"Is she—is she—" gasped my father.

"We can't get an answer," cried my aunt. "We've been knocking for ever so long."

"Stand aside," cried my father.

And, with a blow of his heavy boot, he sent the door open with a crash.

"Go in, women, and see," he cried, turning his back just as Mr. Wilby came up, pale with dread.

"John—John, come!" cried my aunt.

My father rushed in, every one following.

"Bed not slept in—window open," cried my father, looking out—"footsteps! Good heavens! What does this mean?"

"Mean!" cried Sally, in tones of indignant rage; "it means as you've all driven the poor dear to go away out into the snow, instead of having to marry he," pointing contemptuously to Snell.

"How dare you, Sally!" cried my aunt.

"Why, I heard the poor dear tell him so herself last night, in the best parlour; and he turned round on her, and told her he'd lead her a pretty life if she didn't treat him better. Poor dear! if it had been me I'd ha' slapped his ugly face for him."

"Sally!" shrieked my aunt.

"Let him deny it if he can," cried Sally, stoutly.

"Here, quiet," cried my father. "Snell, did you have words with my darling girl last night?"

"Well, sir, she—I—that is—we—little tiff."

"Here, every one of you men follow me, and Heaven grant that we may find her yet alive. Deborah, this is your work, mind."

We were all out in the garden directly after; and there, sure enough, were the poor girl's footsteps, beginning from the window, and leading just into the snow, where it was plain enough she had fallen, after trying to force her way through; and then she seemed to have turned back and made for the garden, and then her footprints were lost amongst others.

We searched here and there. Davy and Billy were sent all over the village, and could hear no news; then a sudden thought seemed to strike my father, and we went down to the pond.

A short look here, however, was sufficient to convince anybody that she could not have drowned herself in the little place broken for the cattle; for it had been frozen hard again.

Search how they would, the one idea was forced back upon all—namely, that the poor girl had wandered away into the snow, and lain down and died.

It was Mr. Wilby who said this, just after Snell, who had been going about as if he did not much care, had said he should go home—and had gone.

"My poor girl!" sobbed my father.

And I saw him break down. I broke down too, and cried bitterly at seeing his grief.

We were all utterly exhausted when, about six o'clock, we assembled once more in the big dining-room, where my aunt sat, cold as a statue and as rigid, with her open Bible before her, and sister Tag down on her knees by her side, red-eyed and nearly heartbroken at the news.

Meanwhile, all the men of the village had turned out, with their dogs and lanterns; and while we were compelled by hunger and weakness to rest, the search was still going on, with men coming from time to time to report progress, such as it was; for they were but searching the ground we had gone over again.

"We didn't half search the churchyard," cried my father, about ten o'clock.

And I started in horror, but accompanied them; and for two hours we wandered about among the snow, only going back as the snow-muffled bell gave forth the hour of twelve.

We were the last of the watchers that night, for the village people had given up in despair. And as we re-entered the porch, my father shuddered as he glanced up at Lizzy's window. So ended our Christmas Day, Harry Forrest saying, as he wished me good-night—

"Tom, my boy, you're going to be my brother-in-law, some day; but if I thought you could turn out such a coward and cold-blooded sneak as that Snell, I'd pray that you might break your neck."

"Thanky!" I said. "Good night!"

VII.

THE next morning we all crept in to breakfast without a word being spoken. Harry Forrest was the only stranger; for Mr. and Mrs. Wilby went the night before, kindly offering to take our relatives with them, and they had gladly left our miserable house.

Father said grace very calmly, and then remained standing, as if he were going to say something; but hesitated, and turned it off to another subject.

"By the way, Tom," he said, "I forgot the musician. Has he been seen to?"

"He said he wasn't wanted here any longer, father," I said, "and he went away."

"Quite right, quite right," said my father, sadly.

And then he glanced round the table in a hesitating way, letting his eyes rest on my aunt, and then on poor Tag, who was ready to burst out crying every moment.

Then my father cleared his throat two or three times, and seemed husky; but at last he said—

"You may think it strange that I have not been out this morning in search of my poor niece; but I had a kind of vision or dream last night. I'm not a superstitious man, but as I slept, it seemed to me that a voice said softly in my ear, 'Don't cry, she is well and happy.'"

"Oh, father, father," cried Tag, hysterically; "then it was true."

And she burst out into a wild, strange laugh.

"What do you mean, my child?" he said, catching her in his arms, and only just forestalling Harry, who made for her at once.

"I was afraid or ashamed to say it before, lest you should laugh at me."

"Well, well," said my father, anxiously.

"I was asleep, father dear," she sobbed—"I had cried myself to sleep, when it seemed as if something leaned over me and kissed me, and then said, 'Don't cry, she is well and happy.'"

There was a solemn silence then in the room, in the midst of which my father returned to his chair, and the breakfast was eaten in silence.

About half an hour after, Davy came in to ask to speak to master.

"Well, Davy," said my father, going out to see him, "any news?"

"Well, you see, sir, Billy was feared to come and tell you hissen, and I said I'd come for him."

"Has he found her?"

"No, sir—that he aint. She be gone, sure enough."

"What do you mean?" said my father, sternly.

"Why do you come to tell me that?"

"You see, sir, he were a bit on, being Christmas time, and searching and one thing or another, and he never went through the stable till this morning."

"Well, was she there?" cried my father.

"No, sir—that's it. She weren't there—she were clean gone."

"What do you mean?"

"The big mare, sir, and the best bridle; and he can't make it out nohow, for the lock wasn't broken."

"Never mind now," said my father. "I've a greater loss to bear."

He walked back sadly to his little room, and took down his pipe and filled it, while I stood unseen behind him, lit a splint, and held it to the bowl, took a couple of puffs, laid the pipe down on the table with a groan, and exclaiming—

"Liz, Liz, my child, it was my doing! I ought to have stopped it. My poor bairn! my poor bairn!"

His head sank upon his hands, and he began to cry like a child.

I could bear no more, and throwing my arms round his neck, I sank on my knees before him, and burst out—

"Father, father—don't, don't—pray don't cry! I can't bear it."

"Bless you, my boy—bless you!" he said, straining me to his breast.

"No, no, don't, father—don't bless me. I know all about it," I sobbed. "Jack Frost took her—Jack Frost took—"

"Yes, yes, my poor boy," he said; "as he's nipped off many a pretty blossom before. But my neglect—my neglect—"

"No, no, father," I cried. "Jack Frost came back and took her. He was the French fiddler."

"What?" roared my father, catching me by the throat.

"I—I couldn't help it, father," I gasped. "He made me promise not to tell till to-morrow, so as to

give them time to get away; but I couldn't bear it any longer, and I came last night and whispered it to you when you were asleep."

"What?" he roared again.

"And to Tag's bed-room, too, and whispered it to her."

"And you let me suffer all that anguish yesterday, Tom—let us all suffer like that?"

"You all made poor Lizzy suffer over that beast Snell, father," I said, doggedly.

"Tom, you scoundrel!"

"Jack Frost made me give my word of honour, father," I said.

He took his hand from my collar for a moment, but caught it again.

"Tell me," he said.

"Yes, father," I panted. "He told me all about how he'd been lost at sea, and in foreign parts for years; and that, when he did get back, the first thing he heard was that Lizzy, who, he said, had been his star of hope, was going to be married to Snell. Then he found out that the musicians were to come, and wouldn't; and, as he could play himself, he came over, and nearly lost himself in the snow; and he wouldn't make himself known till he found out whether Lizzy loved that beast, Snell. And when he heard from Sally she didn't, and all about it, and Lizzy knew him when she dropped the glass, he went down on his knees to me to help him."

"And you helped him, Tom?"

"Yes, father; and went with a message to Lizzy when you were all asleep; and she wouldn't see him for ever so long. Then at last she did, down in the dining-room, with me there; and he told her that her only hope was to fly with him."

"On the old mare, Tom?"

"Yes, father; and it was almost morning before Lizzy would, and only when she began to shiver with dread about being Snell's wife in a few hours; and then she said she would, and wanted to write a letter to you and aunt."

"Well, and where is it?"

"Jack wouldn't let her. He said they'd have a hard enough matter to get clean away as it was; and if she wrote, you'd catch them before they had a chance. And then he made me promise to keep the secret for three days, and I said I would; and I saddled the old mare for them, and Jack held her after I'd locked up again, and went to fetch Lizzy."

"Well?"

"I found her crying in her bed-room, and giving it up, till she thought of Snell, and said she would sooner die, and begged me to give her love and kisses to all, and beg them to forgive her for being such a wicked girl. And then she was afraid to come down again, past your door, and I went, while she locked the bed-room door inside, and got outside, to find that she had dropped from the window and run across, and tumbled, half-fainting, in the snow; and then I helped her up, and took her to Jack, and he lifted her on to the horse, and away they went; and—that's all!"

"Not quite, Tom, my boy!" said my father, reaching out, and taking hold of his whip. "You'll make a true, honourable man, my boy, if I don't spoil you; and I won't."

Something took place with that whip for the next five minutes which made me writhe and twist and grind my teeth; but I never made a sound, and put it all down to Snell, feeling ready to bear more for Lizzy's sake.

"There, Tom," said my father, "I'm very sorry, but I was obliged to do it for your sake. There, my boy, bless you; you've made me very happy, there's half a guinea for a Christmas box."

"And you aint very angry with me, dad?"

"Not a bit, my boy, now. And you don't mind the flogging, Tom?"

"Not a bit, father, now."

"Then come along, my boy, and we'll go and tell the news."

And we did, and my father rubbed his hands and looked happier than I had ever seen him look in my life.

"Kiss her, Harry, kiss her—but no running away, my boy," he said, as Harry caught sobbing Tag in his arms, after my aunt had run up to her room. "Come along, Tom, my boy, and we'll go and tell person Jack's alive after all, and set the bells ringing."

And so we did, and there was a bonfire made on the green after enough snow had been shovelled away; and such a quantity of toast and ale given away as nearly upset the village; but, as father said, that was the strangest Christmas he had ever spent.

It was quite a month before we saw the young married couple, long after they'd returned the horse, and had been forgiven by letter, and quite a fortnight after Snell had left the village; and that day old Davy poked me in the ribs, and said—

"Well, she do look well, Master Tom, eh? But I say, you are a nice boy, aint you?"

I suppose I was; but, then, how could I have done otherwise than make these young people happy as the day is long.

GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.

And Manchester and Liverpool.

The Chemist:

A SEQUEL TO JACK LAW'S LOG.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER I.—IN GREAT BARE-STREET.



ILD must have been the night at sea, for the wind tore through the streets so that the wretched cab-horses would hardly face it. Rumour said that a hansom had been blown over, and the driver taken to the hospital; but it was a fact that barge after barge had broken from its moorings in the river, and, floating upon the breast of the rush-

ing tide, had gone crashing against pier and wharf, sometimes breaking down pile and stage—sometimes to its own destruction. The water leapt fiercely against the buttresses of the bridges, while the wind roared as it rushed through the arches, or between the openings of the balustrades, making the pedestrians hurry across with one hand employed busily in holding on their hats. Housekeepers groaned in spirit, for as the wind rushed over the housetops, it howled in chimneys, spun round cowl, and ever and again sent black-laden puffs of smoke wreathing about the rooms to their occupants' discomfort. Windows rattled, loose gutters shivered in their rusty holders; while ever at corners the wind seemed to lurk and dash at wayfarers hurrying homewards nervously—for a loud crash in the street told of falling tile, slate, or chimney-pot. It must have been a wild night at sea—one that would strew the shore with the shattered wreck of many a goodly ship. But it was undoubtedly as wild a night in that great city—London; and the wind rushed in fury down Great Bare-street, Guelph-square.

The place was deserted, and the storm ruled supreme. But though it sent stifling fumes from the bright coke-fire, burning in the brick furnace, back into the room, it did not disturb Harris Morley, for he was accustomed to strange fumes in his apartment. And there he stood that night, watching with eager gaze the ebullition going on in a large glass retort, fixed above a burning spirit-lamp, and distilling some wondrous fluid into a receiver at its side. The shelf-covered walls were almost hidden by bottles of every size; benches were beneath the windows, covered with a heterogeneous assortment of glass tubes, stands, crucibles, gas furnaces, and mortars. From the roof hung dust-covered, fragile

retorts and receivers, glass syphons, coils of India-rubber tube and wire. The table in the centre was a chemical chaos; while on the chimney-piece above the furnace were ranged some twenty or thirty worn books.

The gas burning over the table was low down, and shaded so that its light fell upon the pages of an open book, whose leaves were stained and torn; but as the presiding genius of this strange attic stooped to examine how progressed his preparation, the light fell upon a massive white forehead, deeply-set dark eyes, thin aquiline nose, and a heavily-bearded face, intent upon the retort, and turning from side to side, so that the crisp, black, curly hair of the beard shone, while ever and anon a tuft was gnawed by a set of glistening white teeth. Now the shade was lifted from the gas, and the moveable fitting drawn nearer to the book, displaying the fine earnest face more plainly. But there was a change taking place in the retort unseen before the light was unshaded, and, snatching away the spirit-lamp, Harris Morley bent down his head to peer through the dewy glass, when his short, black hair caught fire in the bare flame of the gas.

"Tut!" he exclaimed, impatiently, dashing out the fire with his hand, and moving the light a little, heedless of the scorched, crisp locks—for it was time to remove the retort to one of the side benches, and add some new ingredient—when, taking up a small bottle, it slipped from his hands, and fell into an open porcelain dish of water; a few drops splashed up and fell upon the heated retort, when there was a sharp snap as the glass cracked right across, the stopper flew out, and a peculiar odour began to fill the room; while, with an impatient ejaculation, the chemist stood knitting his brows, as he saw the work of a day completely destroyed.

Harris Morley closed his book with a sigh, and replaced it upon the chimney-piece, where its faded back proclaimed that it was no black-letter tome of alchemy and transmutation, but a copy of Fownes's *Chemistry*; and then the tall, well-formed man stood gazing dreamily at the clear bright fire, till he started as the wind shook the house in a gust of unusual violence.

"What a night!" he exclaimed, turning again to his experiment, and lifting the broken retort. "Tut, tut, tut! what a pity!"

"Will you come down, sir? Mrs. Morley wishes to see you," said a voice, whose owner's rustling silk dress had made the student place his hand over his eyes and peer into the darkness by the partly-opened door.

"Is my mother worse?" he said, hastily lighting a chamber-candle and advancing towards where stood a handsomely-featured woman of about thirty, dressed in black, and largely ornamented about wrist, neck, and waist with jet bracelets and chains.

Well dressed, of good figure, striking in appearance, as she stood there, framed in darkness, her olive-complexioned face standing out as it were, a looker-on would have asked himself, Was she handsome? was she lady-like? and then left the matter undecided as he wondered what it was in the goodly features that seemed to repel him. It was not that the eyes were too close, nor that the lips were thin

and tight, for the first were large and lustrous, the latter full almost to sensuality. No; there was something else which seemed to warn the onlooker to preserve the mediate way—to make of her neither friend nor enemy.

"Is my mother worse, Mrs. Levigne?" said Harris Morley, hastily.

"Not so well, I think," said the bearer of the summons, softly; "and she has just sent your sister away. Will you come down?"

Harris Morley hurriedly turned off the gas, and brusquely quitted the room, making the black-silk dress rustle loudly as he brushed by and hurried down the stairs; while an onlooker now would have felt more sure of the warning as he gazed on the knit brows and angry look upon the woman's face, as she stood there thoughtful and silent for a few minutes, biting the nail upon the forefinger of her right hand, and then gnawing fiercely at the skin of each finger by turn, till, half-starting, she stepped lightly out upon the landing, and restraining the rustle of her skirts, passed noiselessly down the stairs to a bedroom upon the second floor, where she stopped listening till a louder gust than usual shook the skylight at the top of the staircase, when, with a light touch, she turned the handle of the door and looked in.

There was a chair set before a dressing-table, whereon stood a pair of candles on either side of a toilet-glass, before which a female figure was bending, her face close to the mirror in a long eager gaze; and so silent was the touch upon the door-handle that she moved not even when the door was again closed.

Down more stairs, with the dress still restrained, went Mrs. Levigne to the door which should have been that of the back drawing-room; and here the landing was in total darkness, save where a bright ray of light streamed through the keyhole and shone upon the jet ornaments upon Mrs. Levigne's waist; while the ray seemed moment by moment to grow shorter, though no sound was heard in the lulls between the heavy gusts but the murmuring of voices in the room. Once voices were heard, and a door shutting downstairs; then came gust after gust of wind rattling window and door, while the ray of light was hardly visible, it was so shortened; though now it fell upon no glittering polished ornament of jet, but shone full upon a little well-formed ear, which seemed to stand out of the darkness in a strange ghostly way, where nothing else was visible.

Murmur, murmur, murmur, and once the impassioned tones of a man's voice speaking loudly and eagerly; then again, murmur, murmur, murmur, till a gust of wind shook the house once more, and seemed about to tear the skylight from over the top of the well-staircase.

And still the shortened ray shone through the keyhole, and the well-shaped ear stood out of the darkness, seeming to drink in the golden light as it played upon its shelly edge, and then plunged into its depths.

Ten minutes—half an hour—an hour had passed, and still the murmuring of one voice, or the impassioned eager tones of another, deep and full, interrupted at times by the gusts of wind, and the rattle

of door and window. But the light still streamed through, and the ear stood out there in the darkness; when, suddenly, a door was opened upon the second floor, and a light streamed out upon the staircase; then a faint, rustling sound was heard, and the ear disappeared; while slowly, and apparently by the aid of a crutch, a strangely stooping figure began to descend the staircase, the light she carried falling upon her pale, drawn features, from which the long black hair was thrown back, and held by a ribbon, so that it fell rippling down her shoulders in long, heavy waves.

Slowly down, step by step, came the figure, her anxious eyes eagerly examining each stair as she placed crutch and foot upon it, as though in constant dread of a fall; while ever and anon she hummed over a few bars of some air. Hers was a wild, painful face to gaze upon, as its smooth whiteness was constantly distorted by the spasmodic action of the muscles—now the forehead would be corrugated, then deep wrinkles would form round the eyes, or directly after the mouth would be contracted, as if by some sharp stab of pain. Then, for a few moments, the pale face would be smooth and calm, as slowly down, step by step, came the figure, one hand guiding a crutch, the other holding a chamber-candlestick, and an elbow resting upon the balustrade, as if for some support.

All at once there was the sound of hurried steps in the room below, a chair was overturned, and the door, from whence the pencil of light had shone, hurriedly opened, and Harris Morley's voice cried loudly in agonized tones—

"Blanche! Blanche! Mrs. Levigne!"

The figure upon the stairs stopped, with starting eyes and parted lips, her face drawn with horror. The candlestick fell from her hand, and she would have fallen had not Harris Morley sprung up and caught her in his arms, when he bore her into the room he had so lately left, and laid her upon a couch drawn up to the fire.

He then tore furiously at the bell, though at the same moment Mrs. Levigne entered the room, calm, cool, self-possessed.

"The doctor, quickly!" shouted the young man, holding his sister up with one hand on the sofa, and pointing frantically towards the bed. "But here—hold Blanche. She has fainted."

And relieved of his burden, he darted from the room, bounded down the stairs, and dashed out of the house, hatless, into the wild stormy night, and fought his way along the street, with the wind seeming to hold him back as he struggled on. Along the great street it came, as if through the tube of some mighty steam-blast; but with set teeth he dashed on, staggered for a moment at a corner, where it was like battling with a powerful stream, and then on he ran again to where the coloured lamp over a door pointed out his goal, beneath which he soon stood, breathless and panting as he tore at the bell.

Ten minutes after he was in another street, dragging at another bell, where the summons was responded to with the same disheartening news—

"Out."

At another doctor's, the third to which he had fought his way—

"Out."

A cab passing, and he leaped in, and bade the man gallop back to their own doctor, where he had first called.

"Not come back," was the reply, though he had expected it.

Would he drive to Dr. Vernon's, in the square?

He had been there.

"To Mr. Sugden's?"

He had been there, too.

Ah! here was master. And at the same moment the driver of a brougham shouted to the cabman to move on, while Harris Morley springing to the door, stated his errand; and the cabman, fearful for his fare, followed behind the carriage into which his late passenger had disappeared.

The door was open, and a policeman in the hall, when the doctor's brougham stopped in Great Bare-street; for in his hurry Harris Morley had left the catch unsecured.

A few words dismissed policeman and cabman, and then once more the agitated son stood beside his mother's bedside.

Only the old story—a long battle against the grim shade, and the conquered one feebly bidding good-bye to those she loved. A pale, handsome woman resting upon the breast of her first-born—that breast which heaved beneath the pressure as it shook with the sobs he could not control; the doctor, holding a glass in one hand, a pulse in the other, standing on the opposite side of the bed, and Mrs. Levigne, eager-eyed and calm, at the foot, holding a shaded candle in her hand; while Blanche, paler, if possible, and with the drawn, horror-stricken face more drawn still, lay upon the sofa, holding both hands upon her heart.

One hour—two hours—the early morning—and but little change; and then a few broken words and sighs eagerly listened to by the son.

Again a pause—a long anxious pause—and the effort of the doctor to administer a stimulant unsuccessful, when suddenly Mrs. Morley's arm was thrown round her son's neck, and she gasped in a hoarse, cracked voice—

"Blanche! Blanche! Your promise, my boy!"

And her eyes gazed wildly into those of her son, while the girl upon the sofa crouched closer to the pillows, and uttered a strange cry as the young man bowed his head.

Then again silence in the room as Mrs. Morley closed her eyes, a silence never again broken by word from her lips, as she lay back upon her pillow for a few hours, to pass away as if in sleep.

CHAPTER II.—THE CAPTAIN.

THEY were not busy at Manyborough's. One young gentleman was closely inspecting a twicedyed, frayed, black silk, while a pale, timid-looking woman anxiously waited the result; two other young gentlemen, with pens behind their ears, were eagerly gazing through the ticketed articles in the shop windows at a fight between a couple of dogs, which were so infuriated that the blows hailed upon them by their owners produced apparently not the slightest effect, while the street rang with the howls and snarling.

"Two to one on the black," said young gentleman number two.

"Thanky, rather not," said number three, who kept inserting the point of a penknife in the frame of the window-casing.

"Forward!" cried the gentleman with the black silk dress; and then to the timid woman: "Couldn't do it;" all the while very carefully and tightly rolling up the dress in a way peculiar to his fraternity.

Just then one of the gentlemen interested in the dog-fight condescended to come forward, and front a half-length figure of a man framed in a dark box, next door but one to that occupied by the timid woman. The back of the shop was dark, though it was early in the afternoon, and the lighted gas jet shone full upon the puffy, aquiline features, heavy moustache, red nose, and prominent eyes of the fierce client, who stroked his moustache, set his hat a little more on one side, and inquired why in the devil's name he was kept waiting.

"All right, Captain," said the shopman; "what can we do for you?"

"Where's your master?" said the Captain, with dignity.

"Isle of Wight; won't be back for a week."

"Here," said the Captain, fiercely, drawing a ring from a fat finger that it did not fit, for it would not pass the knuckle—"here; five pounds."

The man took the ring thrust across the broad counter, looked at it, and looked at the Captain, who gave a snort, and then blew his nose in a series of trumps, and in a most imposing manner, upon a very showy silk handkerchief, which he flourished hugely, and then deposited in an outside breast pocket, leaving the best corner exposed to view. It was a heavy, massively-moulded signet-ring, with a fine cornelian bearing a crest, and on being submitted to the process of a rub on a piece of dark green stone, left a bright gilding upon the surface, which remained unchanged by the application of a drop of nitric acid.

"How much?" said the man, examining the hall-mark inside by the light of the gas.

"Five pounds," said the Captain.

The man turned the ring over, put it upon a dirty finger, flourished the hand in the light, held it at a distance, and evidently admired it, for he half raised his hand to arrange his hair, but recollecting himself, he paused, drew off the ornament, and wrinkling his forehead and thrusting out his under-lip—a facial contortion always to be adopted by refusers of loans, as established by precedent—he placed the ring before its owner and shook his head, while the Captain glared fiercely.

"Couldn't make it half," said the man coolly.

"What!" said the Captain indignantly.

"Not half," said the man; "make it two, if you like."

The Captain snatched up the ring, bustled about in the box as if about to go, made a great pretence of drawing on his buff dogskin gloves, took up his umbrella—a shabby silk with a tremendous ivory head—and then turned to go, as if expecting a recall. But the shopman began to arrange some duplicates in a cool methodical way, with his back turned to the box, whose door the Captain half

opened, half passed, and then returned to lay the ring upon the counter once more.

"I don't care to go any further," he said, pompously. "You can make it four pounds?"

But the man remained obdurate; and after a



quarter of an hour's chaffering the gentleman dubbed "Captain" walked out with one pound nineteen shillings and eightpence in his pocket in lieu of the ring, which he had taken for a debt of honour incurred on the previous night at billiards by a young lieutenant of dragoons with a taste for low society, or, as he termed it, "life."

A large man was the Captain in the streets, which he paraded with shouldered umbrella, staring rudely at every well-dressed female, and making way for no man.

As a rule, people took it as a matter of course that way should be made for the Captain, for he had a big imposing swagger with him; and, as a rule, the world is rather given to making way for people of that class.

The Captain was well known at the dining-rooms in Cheapside, to which he wended his way, for the waiters glanced at him in a surly manner: the man sitting in the little compartment labelled "Cash" looked somewhat glum, and nobody seemed disposed to make way or place here for the new-comer. But the Captain settled himself comfortably in one of the seats, bullied the waiter, dined as well as he could for eighteenpence, sat for an hour after and read the newspaper; and then, stroking his moustache, frowning round the room, and wearing his hat at full cock, he sallied forth into the street, bound for a West-end billiard-room.

Being full early, chance led the Captain along Great Bare-street, by way of a *détour*, when, about half-way down, he stopped short at seeing two ladies in half-mourning alight from a fly—the one pale, stooping, and drawn in features; the other dark, well-formed, and handsome. The flyman received a gratuity, and drove off; while the Captain, half surprised, and evidently gratified, watched till the house-door closed, when he carefully noted down

the number, and walked past, staring hard at the windows; but he was ignorant of the fact that a pair of wild dark eyes were watching with dread his every movement, as their owner cowered behind one of the dining-room curtains till the figure of the Captain passed for the last time, when, hurrying across the room, the watcher hastily drew out the keys of the cellaret, and drank eagerly from one of the decanters, which she replaced tremblingly; for voices were heard upon the stairs, one of which was heard to say—

"Where is Mrs. Levigne?"

The Captain—otherwise Gerald Verrey, otherwise John Danks—went on westward, forgetting his customary swagger, and occasionally altering the position of his hat till it sat upon his head like those of other men; while at times he would stop and rub his hands thoughtfully together, to the great endangering of his umbrella, for more than once it nearly fell.

CHAPTER III.—SHADOWS.

THEY have knockers in Great Bare-street, for the fashion in the architect's days was in their favour, and people had not dreamed then of a couple of bell-pulls labelled respectively "Visitors" and "Servants;" and when these knockers were used, the raps not merely resounded through the houses, but went echoing along the dreary street so loudly that Mrs. Levigne was generally prepared by similar summonses on other doors for the sharp, distinct, double knock of the postman; and since the day when she had seen the stout, swaggering figure of the Captain pass the house she had always been ready to rush out, heedless of appearances, to seize the letters dropped into the box, and scan them eagerly, but always with an air of relief, till one morning, while sitting at breakfast with Harris Morley and his sister, when the usual summons made her set down the teapot she held to distribute its contents in her quality of housekeeper, and hurry from the room.

"Mrs. Levigne expects a letter," said Blanche, somewhat maliciously, as she stroked down the folds of her half-mourning dress.

"What?" said Harris, brusquely, raising his eyes from a sheet of note-paper covered with diagrams embodying results of chemical combinations, but over which he now spilt some of his tea—"what?" he said, turning to his sister.

"The widow expects a letter. She has always been watching for the postman lately, and listening on the stairs," said Blanche, again arranging her half-mourning dress, and gazing at her elongated face in the bright tea-spoon. "She expects an offer; and some one will marry her, I know."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said her brother. "Hope not, though, I'm sure."

And he took up his pencil, and resumed the calculation he was upon when the postman's summons came.

The next minute Mrs. Levinge returned apologetically to the table, and handed a letter to Harris Morley, at the same time tapping the back of another which she held in her hand, and saying—

"I expected this letter so anxiously, that I hope

you will excuse my rudeness in leaving so suddenly."

And all the time she held the letter face downwards, and looked hard at Harris Morley, who raised his head for an instant, nodded, said—

"And forms a fresh combination with the base."

And then held out his cup for more tea.

Mrs. Levigne started and coloured, and then caught the eye of Blanche, when the two women tried hard to read each other's thoughts.

"She wants to know who sent my letter," thought Mrs. Levigne.

And she shuddered, and turned of a sickly pallor.

"She is disappointed about her offer, and I hate her," thought Blanche; and then again—"When will he come?"

"Don't mind me, Mrs. Levigne," said Blanche, wiping the spoon from her saucer, and polishing it upon the delicate handkerchief in her lap, so as to catch a furtive glance at her features. "I don't mind your reading your letter. No one ever writes to me."

"Well, what of that?" said Harris, stirring his tea and smiling pleasantly upon his sister; "who do you think would write to you?"

Blanche sighed; and Mrs. Levigne darted a strange glance at the head of the family, whose bright animated countenance looked almost handsome as he smiled encouragement at his pale, weary-faced sister.

"Going out to-day?" said Harris.

"No," said his sister, watching him eagerly;

"Cecile Vernon is coming to spend the day."

"Glad to hear it," said Harris, cheerfully. "Pleasant day for you both; but don't come bothering me."

Blanche gazed at her spoon with somewhat of an air of disappointment, while Mrs. Levigne's countenance wore a look of triumph; for both had watched for some slight flush of surprise and pleasure in the face of Harris Morley; but the news affected him not, and the next moment he was again dreamily making figures upon the paper before him.

Blanche Morley could not have been satisfied with the aspect of her face in the bright bowl of the spoon, for she returned it to her cup, and then sat furtively watching Mrs. Levigne and thinking about her, wondering what the letter contained, and why she never had friend or relation to visit her. It was quite two years (ever since Mrs. Morley's illness) that she had been with them and taken the management of the house. She had come, representing herself to Mrs. Morley as a widow without family, but by whom recommended Blanche did not know; and as she sat thinking, her face wrinkled and her eyes half closed, so that in a few moments as many years seemed to have been heaped upon her head, till recollecting herself, she smiled and smoothed her face.

"Does she suspect me?" thought Mrs. Levigne.

"I see through you," thought Blanche.

But the next moment batteries were masked.

"What preparations should you like for your friend's reception?" said Mrs. Levigne, smiling, as she wreathed her arm round the waist of Blanche to assist her to rise and leave the room.

An involuntary shudder passed through the girl's frame as she hung back for a moment, and with a pained look in her face gazed up at Mrs. Levigne; but directly after she yielded herself to the proffered aid, and halting slowly, moved across the room to the door, the shudder returning again and again, as if the arm around her were cold and serpent-like, or the shadow of a great dread were upon her, keeping back the warm sunshine of life.

Slowly out into the hall, and slowly up the wide staircase, step by step—for Blanche Morley was trying to walk without the crutch she had used from a child; up past the drawing-room and the back room, where the ray of light shone forth six months before; and still upwards till they reached the second floor, where Blanche sank into a seat before the looking-glass, and sat gazing at her fair head, trying to smooth out the early wrinkles; while Mrs. Levigne, with a strange look upon her face, stood watching her, and at the same time drawing her full upper lip over the lower, till the girl spoke, when she started as if aroused from a dream.

"Go and ask Harry if I may come and sit with him," she said, without turning her eyes from the glass. "But stop; no, never mind," she said, as the door handle rattled.

But she was apparently too late, or Mrs. Levigne would not hear the command, for the door closed, and Blanche angrily stamped her foot and struck at a smelling bottle upon the toilet table, dashing it upon the floor, where it lay in fragments; while the worn, pained look came over her face, and she bit her lips till they were bloodless, as her nostrils distended, and her eyes remained fixed upon the carpet.

Now a door was heard to close upstairs, and a footstep to cross the room overhead, while there followed the murmuring of voices for a few moments. Then silence again; a step or two; voices again



very softly, and then again silence; while the eyes of Blanche Morley seemed starting almost from her head as she craned towards the door, listening intently for every sound.

"Why don't she come down?" the girl hissed. "How dare she stay with him alone? And I sent her; and I'm afraid—afraid—afraid!"

There was still silence overhead, only at intervals the slight movement of a foot, and what sounded like a sigh, and then the scrooping noise of a chair, as if someone had hurriedly seated himself.

The look of passion in the old young face now was something pitiable as it was stretched out towards the door, while in imagination its owner painted some strange scene—one which agitated her so that she trembled violently. First she essayed to get up, but sank back with a heavy sigh; and at last, covering her face with her hands, she sobbed hysterically, the tears streaming between her thin white fingers, while her feeble frame shook with the violence of the emotion. The long black hair hung in massive waves down her back, carefully smoothed, and tied once with a white ribbon, but else untouched by art, and giving a strange dishevelled look to the slight figure half-sitting, half-hanging over the cushioned chair. Ten minutes, a quarter of an hour passed, and still Mrs. Levigne did not return; and sobbing once in heartrending tones, "Oh, mamma, has it come to this?" the poor girl sat waiting till moved by a fresh impulse; when, throwing up her head as if in anger, she tossed back her long hair, rose, and holding on by the various articles of furniture in the room, she made her way to the wash-stand, where she bathed her eyes for a few moments, and then returned to the toilet-glass, and sat watching the play of her features.

"Then I'll counterplot," she suddenly exclaimed aloud; "and we'll see—"

She stopped short to look up, for the handle of the door rattled softly; and, resuming her attitude, Blanche Morley still sat gazing in the glass.

CHAPTER IV.—SUBTLE AGENCIES.

MRS. LEVIGNE walked slowly across the room till she reached the door, which she opened quietly but swiftly, and in the act of passing through heard Blanche's recall; but with a smile upon her lips she closed the portal, stood for an instant, and then, lithe in her movements as a tigress, she slightly raised her dress and bounded up the stairs to the third floor, where, with a flush upon her cheek, she paused for a few moments listening by the door. Her heart must have been beating hardly, for both hands were pressed upon her side; but directly after a soft white hand clutched at the shapely throat, as if pent-up emotions were struggling for utterance, and choked her; then, without pausing to knock, she opened the door and entered, heedless of the pungent fumes which greeted her.

Harris Morley was deep in some experiment, whose main result seemed to be that of filling the room with a noxious vapour; but for all that it must have been satisfactory, from the calm, gratified air worn by the operator, who did not even raise his head from his task as Mrs. Levigne advanced towards him and named the object of her visit.

"Yes—no—yes," he said without looking. "No, no, of course not; this gas would tell upon her

delicate lungs directly. You had better go, Mrs. Levigne."

"I am not afraid," she said softly.

"Eh? not afraid? That's right. By the way, just pass me that bottle."

And he pointed to one alone upon the table near where she stood.

Something seemed to rise in Mrs. Levigne's throat again, and one hand softly struck at it as with flashing eyes she hurriedly took the bottle, and going close up, placed it in his hand, her own soft moist palm resting for a moment upon the sinewy fingers which grasped the little vessel; while an observer might have seen that the flashing eyes seemed to grow humid and softened.

But Harris Morley only saw his experiment and its progress, as, lifting the stopper from a receiver, he gently poured in a few drops from the little bottle, and eagerly gazed upon the ebullition it caused.

"Tut, tut!" he exclaimed, "why haven't we three hands? Now, how can I manage this?"

And he looked about in a vexed way.

"Can I help you?" said Mrs. Levigne, softly.

"Well, 'pon my word, I'm ashamed to ask you," he said. "But if you would not mind, and would keep your dress so that nothing splashed it, I should be glad of a minute's aid."

Mrs. Levigne stood closer to him, with a smile of triumph upon her lip; for she felt that she was attacking Harris upon the weakest side—that the citadel was badly guarded.

"That other bottle," said Harris, "the one with the label. Mind how you take out the stopper; and now, while I use this piece of glass tube, and pour in a few drops, you will pour in very slowly the whole of the contents, almost in drops, if you can—the slower the better. Now, say when you are ready."

Mrs. Levigne's hand trembled visibly as she took the little phial from a stand; but the next instant it was firm in her grasp, as she removed the stopper, and glided close up to the chemist.

"Can't be polite and move," said Harris, laughingly. "You must lean over me and pour it in. Pray mind your dress."

Mrs. Levigne smiled, and leaning forward, rested one hand upon the chemist's shoulder.

"You will not mind?" she whispered.

"Oh no. Now, pour very slowly," said Harris, eagerly.

And as he spoke, standing in front of the glass receiver, the woman came closer, leaning over him so that her shapely form rested lightly upon his arm, and he must have felt the heavy throbbing of her heart, while the long curls of her hair brushed his cheek. But the pulses of Harris Morley hastened not a jot; his strong arm remained firm, and the hand that slowly dripped in the colourless fluid trembled not, as minute after minute passed, the experiment progressed, and he still eagerly watched the ebullition—heedless of the fumes which arose, filling the room with a dense cloud.

Just then Mrs. Levigne sighed; and the sigh was genuine, for it was one of disappointment.

"There, you are tired," ejaculated Harris; "but another minute will do it. Rest your arm more on

me. Be careful; don't spill any over the side, for it might explode. But there's no danger if you are careful.

"There," said Harris, hastily, "stop." And he hurriedly replaced the bottle he had held, all the while using the glass tube with which he had kept the fluid in motion. "And now about poor Blanche. Just keep on agitating that for five minutes, Mrs. Levigne. I'll be back directly."

The next moment Mrs. Levigne was alone, stirring the chemicals with the glass rod; while in their turns anger, contempt, pain, and, lastly, mirth, passed across her handsome face; for fully awake at last to the ludicrous position in which she had been placed, she laughed; but the next moment a few tears of vexation stood in her eyes as she carefully attended to her instructions.

The five minutes passed, and Harris did not return; while now it was Mrs. Levigne's turn to hear voices from below, as Harris and his sister seemed to be in earnest conversation. But the five minutes had passed, and leaving the glass receiver, Mrs. Levigne walked quickly to the mantelpiece, took down a small book, and, heedless of the dust and dirt, thrust it into the pocket of her black dress. She then stepped lightly to the door, opened it, and listened, but all was silent; so returning, she began to examine bottle after bottle of the many ranged on shelves and on racks upon the tables. Now she would take one, remove the stopper, and smell it; then take another, and hold it to the light if a fluid, or pour some of the contents into her hand if a salt—when she would curiously examine the crystals, or stand thoughtful and still, as if calculating their power and properties. Her broad forehead grew wrinkled and clouded, there was a heavy frown over her eyes, and a strange pinching together of the lips; while the side-glances directed at the door, and the attitude of eager watchfulness, told how she was on the alert in case of interruption. Now it was some deadly acid whose salts she turned over, ignorant of their potency, from the short symbols upon the labels being only readable to one versed in chemistry; now, again, a pungent essence whose clear colourless drops would carry death to whoever partook, however sparingly; strange odours, some of a soporific nature, some almost too powerful to be inhaled, all in their turn examined and replaced; while at times a sigh of vexation would be breathed as a bottle was put down.

At last a tiny stoppered phial took her attention, for it was labelled in Latin and English, while a note was added respecting its potency and the care to be observed in its use. Mrs. Levigne's cheeks flushed, and then turned of a sickly hue, as she eagerly grasped the tiny phial, set it down, took it up again, and then hastily replacing it, hurried to the door and looked out carefully. But the murmur of voices still came up, and with noiseless step the watcher hurried back, sought for an empty stoppered bottle, found one without difficulty, and then once more seizing the tiny phial, she opened it, and stood listening ere she took a part of its contents. No token of interruption; and raising a bottle in either hand she stood for a moment trembling violently; then, nerving herself, about half the contents were poured

out, the stoppers replaced, the one bottle returned to the stand, and the other hid in her bosom—while, now that the theft was safely performed, the reaction was so great that Mrs. Levigne stood trembling violently, her forehead damp with the dew begotten of fear, and on pressing her handkerchief to her mouth there was a stain of blood upon the white cambric, showing how she had bitten her lip.

Harris Morley came bounding up the stairs, and hurried into the room full of excuses for his inattention.

"Blanche is in one of her tempers to-day, Mrs. Levigne; try and humour her all you can, poor child. Did you keep on stirring the acids? Ah, ah! Yes, I see," he continued, examining the contents of the glass receiver; "capital! could not be better."

And then poring over the preparation, he became totally unconscious of the presence of the house-keeper, who slowly left the room and descended the stairs, thoughtful and grave. But there came a smile upon her lip as she recalled the scene of half an hour before, and she muttered to herself—

"But I was of service to him."

And then her hand went again into her breast to grasp the little phial, but encountered instead a letter, which she read again and again; and then noting down an address, made her way to the drawing-room, where she tore the letter into fragments, holding the quadrupled paper in her teeth, and tearing it angrily before thrusting the pieces into the fire, which now with heightened colour she watched till the last fragment had burned out, and the tiny starry points of light had ceased dancing in the tinder; when, raising her eyes to the glass above the chimney-piece, she saw that she was not alone, for, supported by a tall, happy-featured girl of her own age, Blanche Morley, with the eager drawn look upon her face, was watching intently her every act.

CHAPTER V.—ANTE.

BRANDON MORLEY died young in the service of his country, fighting hard in that bitter, aggrandizing warfare which added so much to England's greatness, but at the expense of some of her children's best blood and her own honour—without it be honourable to plunder upon a large scale, destroying native princes, confiscating their possessions, and making their children pensioners on the bounty of a conquering power. Brandon Morley left his young wife and sturdy little son—who was destined to visit England for his education—at Madras, when his regiment was ordered up the country to put down some prince who was bitten with the idea that by birthright he was a ruler in his own district, and who refused to acknowledge England's supremacy. And then came the customary skirmishes, marches and counter-marches, cruelties and reprisals, the English troops and mercenaries constantly gaining fresh advantages, till the pursuit was carried on too far; when, closed in by mountains, sheltering a vindictive enemy ever on the alert, it became evident to the commanding officer that he had been led into a trap, and the only course left open to him was to retreat. And a sad retreat

was that : the rear-guard ever harassed by the watchful foe, so that attacks were incessant ; while every crag and ravine sheltered the active men who were at home here, and eager to repay old acts of tyranny.

At length, after bitter days of fleeing before their



foes, the British troops were watching eagerly for the coming of the dawn. Brandon Morley, worn out with anxiety, was sleeping upon the ground, wrapped in his tattered cloak, his drawn sword in the hand upon which his cheek was laid. All at once came the sound of shots echoing in the still night ; then, as he woke and sprang to his feet, came the noise of shouting, a dropping fire mingled with the roll of drums and bugle-calls ; for the videttes had been driven back upon the main body, and the enemy were making a fierce night attack.

At the head of his company, Captain Morley crossed bayonets again and again with the foe, though the greater part consisted of men armed with matchlocks and tulwars—men who fought fiercely, clasp bayonets in their hands, and getting within the soldiers' guards ; while the wild irregular horsemen swept down upon them, cutting up the stragglers without mercy.

It was a fearful night, for the attack had been so sudden : men of one regiment were mixed up with those of another, and thus officered by strangers, the troops lost confidence, and broke before the furious charges made upon them.

Beaten back everywhere, just as day was breaking Captain Morley, with his old friend Lieutenant Dean and about a dozen of his men, was making a gallant stand beneath a tree, when looking round in the hope of succour, his heart sank ; for everywhere the British were being cut down, or flying in different directions. Order had long ceased ; and now, muttering to himself the words "*Sauve qui peut*," he grasped his friend's hand, took a fresh grip of his sword, tried to nerve his weary arm, and shouted cheerily to his men, who replied by falling back in good order, loading and firing by turns, as they tried to make for the shelter of a neighbouring wood. But everywhere

there were yelling foes, dusky faces, and gleaming opal eyeballs ; and soon the retreat was stopped ; and forming a tiny, bristling square, with their officer in the middle, the men repelled the attacks made upon them till their ammunition was exhausted, when they stood stern and calm, showing the same undaunted front ; till suddenly there was a sharp cry, and the lieutenant ran forward a few paces, staggered, and fell.

"We'll e'en die game, sir," said Sergeant Pike, "for they'll only murder us in cold blood if we give up."

Then he darted from his rank, bayoneted an enemy, and retreated again, dragging with him the body of the fallen lieutenant, who seemed to have received his deathblow ; and again darting out to bring in a fallen linesman, whose pouch furnished a dozen cartridges, which were eagerly seized, and brought down nearly as many enemies.

This feat was repeated again and again. But now the square grew smaller : a man dropped here, another there ; and seeing that they were only being shot down by standing inactive, Brandon Morley, after a last glance at the inanimate body of his friend, formed the remaining half-dozen men in line, and with a ringing English "*hurrah!*" they dashed down upon the enemies who crowded in front, and who parted to let them enter, but only to close in again ; and then for five minutes there was the fierce battling of despairing men, fighting against hope, knowing that they must die, but eager first to slay. Muskets were clubbed and swung round, keeping scores of enemies at bay ; while making at a mounted chief, who dashed at him, Brandon Morley parried his sweeping cut, and before the man could recover himself he had run him through ; but at the same moment the horse bore the gallant captain back,



and he fell heavily to the ground, with not a friend at hand to aid. But he was determined to die hard ; for the thought of wife and child nerved him ; and leaping up, one sweep of his sword drove back the

yelling enemies who had dashed at him. One man went down with a ghastly cut across his cheek, another received the captain's point in his chest—a true home-thrust from the shoulder; but in his dying agony he clasped the blade with both hands. It was



dragged out of his grasp directly; but that moment was fatal, for a sweeping cut from a keen scimeter fell upon Brandon Morley's wrist as he raised his arm for the next blow, and then the good blade dropped from his hand to the extent of the sword-knot, while simultaneously with a sharp report from a mountaineer's long gun, he clasped his hand to his forehead and fell.

The news reached Madras too soon, and ere long the mourning widow was on board the East-Indiaman *Brahmin*, bound for home—for the land that she felt would never be a home for her. She reached England almost in a dying state, mourning ever for the lost one, and almost shuddering at times when they brought her eager-eyed son to her bedside—a fine little fellow of seven or eight; but his stricken parent shuddered and burst forth again into fresh paroxysms of grief as she traced the lineaments of the slain man in his child, so that at last it was deemed advisable to keep the little fellow from her. But that was no easy task; for, active and keen, the child was constantly escaping and getting to his mother's bedside, where he would stay motionless, hidden behind the curtains, for an hour together.

At length one day there was silence in the room, while the most eminent men the profession could send watched and waited for a favourable turn in the patient. A tiny, weakly girl of two hours old was wailing in an adjacent room, but the mother hardly breathed, while the doctor's hand scarcely ever left her pulse; but that pulse fluttered, grew stronger, feebler, stronger again, passing through all the phases of an expiring flame for a while, and then revived more and more.

The widow Morley lived to see her son Harris grow to a fine, manly fellow—loving, patient, and tender to his invalid mother and the weakly que-

rulous sister, who was ceaseless in her importunities, asking for fresh amusements but to cast them away satiated the next hour. Harris grew up with the martial ardour of his father strong in his breast, and the boy would flush with pride as he read of his father's gallantry on the night of the fatal retreat. The old piece of newspaper that he had stolen from among his mother's treasured scraps was worn and frayed; but he never confessed to his love of the army, for the fond mother shivered at the very name, and clasped him eagerly to her breast.

But one passion he gratified, and that was a love for chemistry, whose secrets he was for ever probing, spending long hours in the attic he had made his laboratory; while in his domestic life he was gentle and tender almost as a girl.

For some years Mrs. Morley grew stronger; and, rejoicing at the change, the son was ever inventing some new amusement that should cheer his mother. But at times letters would come—first from India, in later years from New Zealand and Australia—for they came from Brandon Morley's old friend and messmate. The first letter came long after he had been mourned as dead, written in an impassioned strain, and telling of the gallantry of Brandon Morley all through the perils of the awful retreat—how, twice over, he had saved the writer's life at the imminent risk of his own, though it did not tell of how well the debt had been paid as many times; of how, shot down, the writer had lain insensible for hours, and at length, crawling painfully from amidst the dead and wounded, he had come at last upon the body of his friend, lying calm and peaceful, with the fierce dying look faded from his countenance, to give place to a smile. The sword-knot still hung to his wrist, and unloosing the belt and sash, Ralph



Dean had strength left in him to return the weapon to its sheath, bind round it the blood-stained sash, and then hold them tightly to his breast ere he lay in a state of insensibility for how long he knew not; for it was a long and tedious struggle back to life

and vigour, even when, once more in the hands of his countrymen, he received all the skilled attendance that his wounds demanded.

And now this first letter from over the sea came to announce the long, slightly-made box which arrived by the same mail, and over whose contents little Harris saw his mother weep piteously, as she pressed the crimson silk sash to her lips where it was darkly stained, and again and again shudderingly half drew the keen blade from its scabbard, and then, replacing it, kissed the handle.

Letters still, through years and years, telling of long service abroad, and hardly-won promotion; of the grace and beauty of the two girls who cheered the exile's life, and whom he could not find the heart to send to England. Letters at length from New Zealand—and lastly, shortly before Mrs. Morley's death, from Australia—telling of the Major's intention to retire on half-pay, and spend the remainder of his days in England—the country he had avoided so long, in the hope of foreign service bringing quicker promotion.

This letter, too, spoke more plainly of the father's hopes, dwelling at length upon the characters of his two children; and telling, too, that, after all, for his girls' sake, for the sake of whichever of them should be his godson's wife, he was glad now that Harris had not entered the profession.

"God bless him!" wrote the major. "I am glad after all; for it is an ungrateful service, and I have long enough felt disgust at seeing the power that wealth gives to young subalterns; for it goes hard with a man whose hair is gray to see a junior placed over his head. Perhaps after all, dear friend, it is only vanity; but if the man whose hand I gripped years back in India—if he and I had been in the French army, we should have occupied different positions had we lived. But there, I feel almost to have been guilty of high treason writing in this strain; so will conclude with my darlings' love, and remain yours ever,

RALPH DEAN.

"P.S.—Mary bids me ask if Harris has discovered the philosopher's stone yet, and says that it would not be needed here, where we live in an atmosphere of gold. I tell her that the man who owns her and her golden locks will need no philosopher's stone. Bear with me, for I am growing old and tedious, and—can I say more?—I am a father. R. D."

But now the letters came more frequently. Now, too, there would be one from Mary Dean to Blanche, now one from her sister Maude; the first writing in a quiet firm strain, the letter of the second being more in accordance with the epistles taught at finishing establishments. But the tone throughout adopted by both families in their correspondence was that of relations who had been in the closest bonds of intimacy all their lives, though the younger branches had never gazed upon each other in the flesh.

Harris was not romantic; but there was an attraction for him in the bright, speaking countenance that looked earnestly at him from the photograph, at the bottom of which, in a neat, firm hand, was written "Mary Dean;" while he felt a sort of brotherly interest in the subdued, timid, dark-complexioned girl, whose large eyes gave a striking as-

pect to the likeness bearing in pointed characters the name "Maude."

"Maude," he said, setting the card down, and leaving upon it the black impression of his dirty thumb—"Maude. Why, she ought to have been a blue-eyed, tawny-haired, buxom girl, to have borne that name; eh, Blanche?"

Blanche was gazing at him in her hard, strange way when he went up and smoothed the wrinkles out of her forehead, to the sully of her white skin, while the wrinkles rippled up again as the finger passed.

"I shall be jealous, Harry," she said. "But which is it to be?"

"Ah," said Harris, laughingly; "I shall let you choose."

CHAPTER VI.—"THE SOLDIER TIRED."

MR. and Mrs. Pike sat in Burder's-buildings, which, as everyone knows, is the first turning after crossing Ammonia-mews when you leave Lankstreet, the boundary between the West Central and Western postal districts—Mr. and Mrs. Pike sat in Burder's-buildings, in their own particular domicile, a five-roomed house, like so many tea-chests nailed one above the other to the side of a ladder. Mr. Pike's house was like Mr. Turner Pike—Turnpike, as his friends called him—tall and thin, and had been ingeniously constructed by an architect given to making the most of things. Before the house was built it had been proposed at a parish meeting that the scrap of waste ground should be used as a standing-place for the fire-escape; but a scheming guardian laid his finger solemnly upon his nose, and hinted at the value of building sites; talked long about desirability of the spot for a tall person; and the consequence was that five rooms were built one upon another, with steep ladders at their sides; the building was painted and tucked tightly in between two edifices, to keep it from falling; and then it was solemnly christened a house, and let upon a lease for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, to Mr. Turner Pike, late colour-sergeant of the 92d Highlanders, now living upon his pension, savings, and those of Mrs. Pike, late confidential maid to Lady Theresa Thurster, who remembered her in her will.

You went into Mr. Pike's house by the street-door, naturally, and stood in a narrow passage; when, whether you went up or down, whether you were of the masculine or feminine gender, you passed along that frail passage, and then, if your ideas were for elevation, up the narrow stairs, rustling and sounding to the occupants of the various rooms like a sweep busy in a flue; while, if of the soft sex and given to steel-work distensions, the noise was something startling.

But to return to the front door, which you are to suppose you have just entered, and, after a struggle, forced yourself past the person who has opened unto you, and been nearly crushed flat behind the thin piece of green-painted paneling, whose brass knocker shines so brightly. If now you turned to the right, you would enter Mr. Pike's parlour or general sitting-room; if you went straight forward, you could make a sudden plunge, and, by the force

of gravity, find yourself in the kitchen—a dark dungeon lit by a grating, and made musical by a gurgling water-pipe connected with the Great Conjunction Waterworks and the house cistern, whose supply it gave by means of a ball-cock—an ingenious piece of mechanism of a hungry temperament, and largely given to the consumption of “ile,” as Mrs. Pike said, but for all that, much in the habit of “sticking,” and either admitting no water till it was poked down with the tongs, or else being too generous, and swamping the kitchen with the overflows of the cistern. But in this case, Mr. Pike put the kitchen table by the sink, a chair upon that, and again upon the chair a small stool; when that gentleman, poker in hand, stormed the shower-bath, and stirred up the recreant copper globe to its proper floating position; during which ceremony Mrs. Pike always aired a dry shirt for her lord, since experience had taught that any attempt to escalate covered by an umbrella was useless.

There were drains beneath Mr. Pike's kitchen—loud-smelling drains—whose odours would not be caught in traps. But then, as Mrs. Pike said, they only smelt in wet weather; and besides, the effluvium was fairly distributed through the various rooms.

But to return again to the front door, and go upwards, you would arrive at the first floor, Captain Verrey's sitting-room; a sharp turn round, and another steep ascent, and you were upon the second floor, Captain Verrey's bedroom; another sharp turn, and another ascent, and you were at the third floor, Mr. and Mrs. Pike's room; while, if you liked to ascend the next ladder, and thrust up the trap-door, so carefully pasted round with strips of paper in winter, you would be on the roof, and surrounded by a grove of chimney-pots, placed there for the same reason as the trap-door—on account of fire, of which valued slave Mrs. Pike had so wholesome a dread that one night she scrambled out upon the slates upon a false alarm, and, to use her own expression, sat there till she “took the dreadfullest cold.”

But if, instead of ascending the stairs, you had entered Mr. Pike's parlour, you would have found him and his lady seated as stated at the head of this chapter.

Mr. Pike, a very lank personage, with an elongated or squeezed head, sat ungracefully beside the fire, with a red cotton handkerchief spread upon his knees, and upon that a yellow basin containing tubers and water, the former being occasionally rinsed in the latter, and then carefully peeled by Mr. Pike before being deposited in a little black saucepan upon the hob. On the opposite side of the fireplace sat Mrs. Pike, caressing her knees, and keeping guard over a small black teapot and a tiny dutch oven containing a thin rasher of bacon in a state of violent perspiration. Mrs. Pike was a diminutive, jerky woman, with thin features and a sharp nose, very clean and neat in her appearance, and strong in pins, one of which showed a tiny, obtrusive head wherever a pin could be stuck. But they did not look a couple much given to fondling; so doubtless Mr. Pike's fingers escaped poignant inflictions from the points with which his lady bristled. Prim, clean, and bright was the room, but decidedly quakerish.

Everything was sad-coloured, from the curtains to the paper. Even the cat was drab; while the ornaments upon the chimneypiece were Time, supported on either side by Religion, Ancient and Modern—that is to say, a cracked alabaster timepiece, with a highly unintelligent watch-face; and at one end of the chimneypiece a china group of a noseless Abraham, apparently about to shave a headless Isaac, and so astonished at his condition that he had dropped the knife or razor, what time a woolly dog with horns butted his calves; at the other end a drab money box labelled “Ebenezer.”

“Eleven,” said Mr. Pike, letting a potato slip through his fingers, and splashing himself as it fell into the water. “Blister—”

“Turner Pike!” said Mrs. Pike, austere.

“Blisters aye comes on your hands from hard work,” said Mr. Pike, mildly.

Mrs. Pike gave herself a jerk, and took a fresh hold of her knees.

“Eleven,” said Mr. Pike. “Time he was up.”

“Did you clean his best boots?” said Mrs. Pike.

“Which are the best?” said her husband.

“Don't scoff, Turner Pike,” said the lady. “It is carnal-mindedness to speak scornfully of your neighbour's goods. Did you put the Captain's boots to the fire?”

“I did, my lassie,” said Mr. Pike, wiping his nose on a corner of the handkerchief spread upon his knees—an awkward feat for so stiffly-drilled a man, from the amount of stooping it required.

“Did you tell him a lady called last night?” said Mrs. Pike, unslashing her knees, sighing, and drawing the dutch oven a little farther back, and the kettle a little more over the fire.

“I did, my lassie,” said Mr. Pike, cleverly gouging the last potato, one so large that it had to be cut in two before the lid of the little saucepan would go on; and then it shut with a snap, and splashed water all over the brightly-polished grate hobs.

“Ah, Turner Pike!” said Mrs. Pike, shaking her head, while the water fizzed.

Mr. Pike did not answer, but rose and left the room in a slow march adapted to circumstances, and carrying with him the yellow basin and potato-peelings. In five minutes he returned, wearing a pair of large leather gloves and a coarse apron, and bearing in his hand a blacklead-brush, with which he carefully polished off the marks left by the water upon the hobs; then marched off once more to the lower regions, and returned calmly and sedately to seat himself opposite to his wife, pulling down his waistcoat, adjusting his chin in his stiff stock, and holding himself erect as if waiting for orders.

“What did the Captain say when you told him?” said Mrs. Pike.

“When I told him what, my dear?” said Mr. Pike.

“That a lady called last night.”

“He said, ‘D—n it all—’”

“Ah!” ejaculated Mrs. Pike, as if a spasm had shot through her frame. “Two oaths uttered in this room since last Sabbath! Oh, Turner Pike! Oh, Turner Pike!” Here Mrs. Pike jerked a handkerchief from her pocket, and applied it twice to her eyes; then drew from the same pocket a small, flat tin canister that had once evidently held paste-

blackening; and while her husband eagerly watched the process, Mrs. Pike drew forth a sixpence, and sighingly dropped it through the slit in the box labelled "Ebenezer."—"Two oaths this week, Turner Pike; two sins for atonement! Our offering to the benighted will be heavy this half."

Mr. Pike's face became very wooden, and he sat very still till a bell-ringing started him from his seat. Then came the noise of a heavy footfall overhead, one which made the window frame chatter. The pot was filled and placed to draw, the bacon pushed so that it should frizzle, two slices of bread were toasted by Mr. Pike, and then a plate and dish heated by pouring boiling water in them; when, taking them behind Mrs. Pike's back (that lady not leaving her seat), the water was poured off, and Mr. Pike wiped them upon his pocket handkerchief, the same useful piece of cotton fabric being used to wipe the bottom of the tea-pot and dust the tray upon which the breakfast preparations were deposited.

"Don't forget the book," said Mrs. Pike, mildly, just as another violent peal was heard from the bell.

"Hadn't ye better leave it where—"

"Put the book on the tray, and lay it by his side," said Mrs. Pike, authoritatively. "It's up there behind Abraham."

Mr. Pike placed a red-covered memorandum book upon the tray, opened the door, and carried out the Captain's breakfast in his stiff formal way, drawing the door after him with one foot; but he was closely followed by Mrs. Pike, who jerked herself out of her seat, and walked across the room in a series of starts, keeping close behind her husband, and on reaching the top of the first instalment of the ladder, squeezing by, and continuing her route upwards,



while Mr. Pike entered the first-floor room and fed the lion that was its occupant.

But there were sundry and fierce growlings heard before Mr. Pike once more descended, bearing the book in his hand, which he slowly proceeded to de-

posit behind Abraham, an act which led him to the chimney-piece, and caused his eyes to rest upon first the time—half-past eleven—and then upon the money-box.

Quickly, and much less stiffly, Mr. Pike stepped to the door and listened. Mrs. Pike was in their own room, for he heard her sneeze in a jerky way, as if she did it by machinery, and this were her way of giving warning before striking. Back to the chimney-piece went Mr. Pike, and taking the box from its place, he seized a table knife and inserted it at the slit, when, turning up the bottom of the cash receptacle, he shook it gently, working the blade about to cause a small coin or two to slip from the slit—but without success.

Just then the potatoes began to bubble, and a little water escaped into the fire with a loud hiss. Mr. Pike's face became crimson, the box was in its place, and he was clearing the table the next moment. But the alarm passed off, and the culprit went once more to the stair-foot and listened, this time to hear Mrs. Pike cough; when, hurrying back and closing the door, Mr. Pike seized knife and box, went down on his knees upon the hearth rug, inserted the knife blade, gave the box a vigorous shake once, twice, three times, when out fell a sixpence and a three-penny-piece, the latter being shaken into the drab cat's ear, but directly after expelled into the fireplace. But both pieces were quickly transferred to the pocket of Mr. Pike, the box replaced, and he was busy clearing away bread and plates from the side-table when Mrs. Pike returned.

"Did I hear you break something, Turner Pike?" she said, looking at him suspiciously.

"No, lassie," said Mr. Pike, innocently.

"And about the money?" said Mrs. Pike.

Mr. Pike's mouth opened, and his hand went involuntarily into his trousers-pocket, as he stared guiltily at his partner.

"Money?" he gasped.

"Yes. Did he pay?" said Mrs. Pike.

"Oh no," said Mr. Pike, recovering himself, and taking the memorandum-book from behind Abraham. "He said he would ask for the book when he wanted it."

"Poor man!" sighed Mrs. Pike; "he is pressed, perhaps. But there are no plates down to warm, Turner Pike."

Mr. Pike opened a cupboard, and, producing two, stood them up in the fender.

"And dishes, Turner Pike."

"Yes, lassie," said Mr. Pike, obeying, and evidently much relieved.

"And now fetch a bit of steak—tender, mind," said Mrs. Pike, once more producing the tin canister.

"Yes, lassie; and—"

"Well, Turner Pike?"

"Can you spare me sixpence, my dear? I don't think I have any tobacco left; and—"

Mrs. Pike jerked herself into a chair, shut the canister with a snap, and made its contents rattle as she replaced it in her pocket.

"Not more than a pound and a half, mind, and tender," she said, sternly.

Mr. Pike took down his hat from a peg in the

corner, drew a small basket from an upper shelf in the cupboard, and prepared to go.

"Shall we want the kitchen fire, lassie?"

"No," said Mrs. Pike; "we'll grill it here."



"Shall I bring in the beer at the same time, lassie?"

"No, of course not," said Mrs. Pike; "it would be flat before dinner was ready; and you can go again."

Mr. Pike drew himself up to his full height, and marched to the door; but he drew back, for the Captain came down, went out, and then taking his basket, Turner, late Sergeant Pike, went for a juicy steak.

CHAPTER VII.—FETTERS FOR A SLAVE.

CAPTAIN VERREY sat in his particular tea-chest, lolling over his breakfast, and reading the morning paper.

All at once the Captain started, and listened attentively, for there was a double knock at the front door—that is to say, at the door of the house; and as he sat, he heard noises, and then the loud rustling of a silk dress, as steps ascended the staircase. Directly after there was a tap at the door, of which the Captain took not the slightest notice, but waited for the next tap, when he started as if from a reverie, and uttered a sonorous "Come in," but kept his head behind the paper, while Mr. Turner Pike ushered in a tall, thickly-veiled lady; but not without difficulty, for the lady's robes were most ample, and the little landing was so small that the usher had to climb up a couple of the steps of the next ladder to make way for the visitor.

"Well, Mrs. Pike, what can I do for you?" said the Captain, with his face still concealed behind the newspaper; while Mr. Pike closed the door, and descended the stairs, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "Take a seat, Mrs. Pike," continued the Captain, coughing behind his paper, and frowning very severely.

But the next moment his face assumed an aspect

of the most profound astonishment, for the paper was snatched from his hand, crumpled up, and dashed upon the fire, where it blazed fiercely for a few moments, and then fell a shapeless heap of tinder in the fender.

The Captain's look of profound astonishment seemed to fade into that of some other emotion, for his face turned pale, all but the pimples upon his cheeks and forehead—a nasty, unwholesome-looking pallor which did not add to his personal appearance for the better. Involuntarily he thrust back his chair, and stared at the piercing eyes that flashed on him through the new comer's thick veil, while their owner, with one hand resting upon the breakfast-table, leaned forward, and thrust her face towards his.

"My darling," exclaimed the Captain, forcing a smile, "what, is it you?"

Without a word being spoken in reply, Captain Verrey's visitor raised a small gloved hand slowly, and the movement was imitated by the Captain; but the next moment he leaped furiously from his chair, for the little hand fell sharply across his face, and was raised as if to repeat the blow.

"Curse—" ejaculated the Captain. Then checking himself, he stepped towards the veiled figure, but not so quickly as it retreated, noisily snatched up the little poker from the fender, and held it in a threatening way. "Hush, pray!" whispered the Captain, his valour fading like a mist under the heat displayed before him. "Hush, pray, or we shall alarm the people in the room beneath."

"Sit down, then," said the visitor, pointing to a chair. And upon the command being obeyed, "Now, how dare you write to me?"

"My darling," began the Captain, fidgeting in his chair, and looking green with fear and anger combined. "My darling, I saw you in the street, and the recollection of happy days—"

"John Danks," interrupted the visitor, "answer my question. Why did you write to me?"

"My own," said the Captain, in humble tones, "it was for the pleasure of seeing—"

The fierce movement of the visitor checked the speaker.

"You want money?" said the visitor.

"Well, yes, I am pushed just now."

"And when I have given you money, you will spend it, and then write to me for more?"

"Oh, no, my own," said the Captain, eagerly.

"Silence, fool!" said the visitor, tearing off her veil, and showing a countenance white with passion. "Three years now since you saw me; and now that you have found where I have obtained a settlement, you will dog my steps, and hunt me, craving ever for money."

"But my darling wife!" murmured the Captain.

"Dare to say that word again!" hissed the woman; and the poker was raised menacingly. "I am not your wife. You deceived me, you villain! It was a trap—a lie—a false affair; and you know it."

"Hush!" whispered the Captain; "think, my own, of the consequence—the people downstairs."

"You brought it upon yourself. But now throw up all that fool's talk and speak out, or I'll set you at defiance. I've lived now a life of peace for three

years, and you come to blast it. You want money. Well, on certain conditions you shall have it; but if you dare in the slightest degree to thwart me—if you dare to come near the house where I live or recognize me in the street—I'm a desperate woman, John Danks—and if you drive me to extremities, by all that's lovely in heaven or hideous elsewhere I'll follow you, I'll track you always! You wish me to come back to you. Yes, you say you do; and I will; and as I'm sure of death sooner or later, I'll—"

Mrs. Levigne placed the poker softly upon the table, laid a hand on either of the Captain's shoulders, and as she spoke she fixed him—almost fascinated him—with her eyes, that never flinched for an instant. She finished her sentence in a low whisper close to his ear, while he trembled visibly and wiped the perspiration from his damp forehead.

"You she-wolf," he muttered, pouring some brandy into his cup and drinking it hastily; after which he began to murmur something about love and devotion and forgiveness.

"Well?" said Mrs. Levigne, sternly.

"I did not speak, my own," said the Captain.

"What were you going to say?" said Mrs. Levigne.

"Nothing—nothing," murmured the Captain.

But at last Mrs. Levigne rose from her seat and drew forth a *porte-monnaie*, whose appearance made the Captain's eyes twinkle.

"I shall give you five pounds now," said Mrs. Levigne, in a calm, cold voice, "and when I think fit I shall *bring* you more; you understand, *bring* you more."

"Or I can write," said the Captain, maliciously.

"Yes, or you can *write*," said Mrs. Levigne, with a finger raised menacingly. "You can *write*; and by so doing you will destroy my plans; for that same hour I shall leave the house, and you will have to find my abode once more. I mean it. You know I can keep my word; and you can do as you please. You dog," she hissed, "that I could ever have been fool enough to fear you! There—sit still, and beware how you destroy the source of the golden eggs. It shall be as I please; and if the time comes when I can put a few hundreds in your hands you shall go abroad and stay there. But enough now. Take what I have put upon the table there;" and she thrust the money towards him.

"Make it ten, now, my dear," said the Captain, losing no time in transferring the coins to his pocket.

But his visitor did not move her head as she gazed thoughtfully into the fire, and the Captain sat with a strange nervous sensation upon him that made him fidget in the chair, and look uneasily towards the dark handsome face. Now he would seem to pluck up spirit, and rouse himself to his ordinary state; but the next moment he was subsiding nervous and flaccid in his chair, and refreshing himself with more brandy. And yet he could not settle himself to the position.

Years back this woman had been his abject slave, trembling at his very look, and believing in him with the most unbounded faith. His will was law, and his lightest expressed wish willingly

obeyed. He abused her, struck her with coward hand, trampled upon her best feelings; but was she not his wife? she said; and so she bore all uncomplainingly, giving back smiles sometimes for unkindness—never more than tears. Reproaches never left her lips; and even in the greatest privations her hand was ready to work, and help supply his necessities.

But the time came at last when John Danks rent off bit by bit the veil which covered his rascality; for Hester Ray awoke to the fact that she had been basely cheated and deluded—cheated so that her marriage was in the eyes of the law but a mockery and a sham.

"You will not write to me again," said Mrs. Levigne, suddenly turning upon the Captain.

"Not if you do not wish it, my darling," said the Captain, forcing a peculiar smile.

"Have done with that trash, and speak like a man, if you can, for once in a way," said the visitor, sternly.

The Captain gave a sulky, half-offended grunt, and shuffled in his chair.

"You will not write, mind," continued Mrs. Levigne; "and you will not, as I have before said, attempt to recognize me, unless I give you permission; and, upon those terms, I shall allow you what little money I can spare."

"Don't be hard upon me," murmured the Captain, rising and stretching out his hands as he advanced slowly towards the fierce woman—"don't be angry; let's be friends again. I'm sure you'll find me kind and forgiving; and you can go backwards and forwards as you like, and—"

All this while the Captain had been gradually edging towards his visitor, speaking in a quiet, soothing tone, and viewing her as though she had been some savage creature, with danger in her slightest movement. But Mrs. Levigne stood beside the table erect, proud, and scornful. If the glances of an eye could have withered, then surely must John Danks have sunk shrivelled at her feet; but, though the look he encountered caused him an uneasy sensation, he still approached, emboldened somewhat by the brandy he had taken and the utter immobility of his visitor. But now Mrs. Levigne made a movement, one so slight as hardly to bring into play the muscles of her powerful arm; for as her hand rested upon the table she closed her fingers round the white haft of a table-knife, gave a slight turn to her wrist, and then, without raising her arm, stood sideways, with the blade pointed towards him, and her cold, contemptuous look feeding upon the start of fear, and the abject shrinking of the man as he cowered back to his chair and sat watching her.

For it was a nasty-looking blade, one of a damaged set, very old and worn when Mr. and Mrs. Pike bought them a bargain at a sale in the neighbourhood; while since that time Mr. Pike had taken a particular fancy to this very cheese-knife, from its being what he called "a bit of good stuff;" and he cleaned it and sharpened it, and sharpened it and cleaned it, again and again, so that the old worn blade had become more and more worn till it came to a very sharp point; while, though it was a secret from the Captain, it was nevertheless a fact that the

edge of that knife was so keen that regularly every Saturday night, after Mrs. Pike had gone up first to bed, Mr. Pike used it for the purpose of operating upon his corns, the consequence being that he walked to church the next day more upright than ever.

So disagreeable-looking, then, was the blade of that knife, and so slight but so calm and impressive was the action which laid its point towards him, that the Captain shrank back into his chair and sat wiping the perspiration out of the palms of his hands, till with one more quiet, imperious gesture Mrs. Levigne turned to go, rustling loudly down the stairs to announce her coming to Mr. Pike, who drew himself up as small as possible as he held the door for the visitor to pass through.

CHAPTER VIII.—EDGED TOOLS.

A LETTER from Australia, Blanche knew by the handwriting, and her heart beat faster as she thought of the coming of the Major and his daughters; and as this thought was predominant, her eyes flashed, and she darted a look of triumph towards Mrs. Levigne, who met it with a smile, before which the eyes of Blanche sank, and she shuddered slightly.

With rugged forehead Harris Morley read on to the last word, when, quietly doubling the letter back in its original folds, he placed it in his breast pocket, towards which Mrs. Levigne darted a hasty glance, while the look of disappointment visible on the countenance of Blanche was pitiable. But the next moment the young man drew forth the letter once more, read portions again, and then thrust it into the fire, before which he stood till it was burned, when without a word he strode from the room, and hurried up to his laboratory.

The tears that were gathering in the eyes of Blanche Morley were forced back as she encountered the inquiring glance of her companion, and they sat for some time in silence, trying to read each other's thoughts. Mrs. Levigne, keen and calculating, felt convinced that it related in some way to the young man's future career—a career that it was her aim to direct in person. But in what way?

She knew that Major Dean was expected to return from Australia, and that he had two daughters; but knowing that the younger branches of the two families had never met, this caused her little anxiety; and besides, she reasoned that it might be a year or two before the Major's return, and long before that time she hoped—

"But we must let things take their course, my dear boy," wrote the Major; "let's see what a few months' intimacy will produce, for I know you will feel how the dearest hope of my life is to see my girls happy. A hundred things may happen to prevent such a consummation; but as it had for years been a subject upon which I was given to babble, why, I've brought it up again and babbled."

Altogether the Major's letter had the effect of making the household in Great Bare-street most thoroughly uncomfortable; and when Harris reached his room, in place of following his customary pursuits, he took out the little portrait left by his sister, and gazed long and earnestly at this last likeness

of Mary Dean; carelessly placed it in one of the pockets of his coat; made as if about to hurry from the room, but paused; then strode up and down the room awhile, thoughtfully talking to himself, till, leaning against a window-frame, he stood recalling the past from amidst its shadows.

"Eight months to-day," he muttered sadly, as, taking a bottle from a rack, he paused before a sheet-almanac secured against the wall, and beneath one day of which a deep black mark had been made. "Eight months to-day. How time goes! Poor mother! I don't think we miss you one half so keenly as we should."

"May I come in?" cried a cheery voice.

And Harris started and frowned slightly as he gave the required permission; when a well-formed, good-looking young man entered with a rolling, heavy, swaggering step, that made you disappointed because there were no jingling spurs upon his heels.

"How you do smell of physic, old boy!" said the new-comer, shaking hands heartily. "How are you, and what does the last experiment prove?"

"Nothing," said Harris, smiling at the good-humoured face before him.

"If you'd only find the philosopher's stone, as uncle calls it, what a trump you would be, Harry! By the way, I had a letter from the old boy this morning, and he's coming home soon with the girls—half-pay, you know. Only came back myself yesterday. Heard from nunky?"

"Yes, I heard from him this morning," said Harris, his face becoming overcast once more.

"Glad to see him," said the other. "Wonder what sort of a fellow he is to know. Nice girls they seem by the *cartes* and their letters. Pity they're first cousins, aint it?"

"Very great," said Harris, drily. "That's a caustic of great power, so mind how you remove the stopper, Fred."

"Hang the stuff!" said Frederick Dean, replacing a bottle hastily. "I wonder you don't poison yourself with some of your trash. What's this, now—scent?" he continued, removing the stopper from another bottle.

"For God's sake, mind!" shouted Harris.

And, stepping forward, he dashed the vessel from the young man's hand, so that it shivered against the wall, filling the room with a strange subtle odour; while hurriedly making his way to the windows, the student threw them up, and then opening the door, created a sharp current of air, which, aided by the water with which the fluid was liberally diluted, soon dissipated the vapour; and leaving the pool soaking into the floor, after a while Harris closed the windows.

"I shall come up here some day," said Frederick Dean, emphatically, "and find you waiting for a coroner's inquest, as sure as I'm a poor lieutenant of dragoons. Why, the place isn't safe to enter, hang me if it is! One takes up a delicate-looking smelling-bottle, and removing the stopper, prepares for a sniff, when it is dashed from one's hand by the proprietor, who comes running at you like a wild beast, and then tells you it is a deadly poison."

"Haven't I warned you again and again," said Harris, "not to touch my preparations?"

"Well, yes, I suppose you have," said his visitor; "but one can't always think, you know."

"Think! no," said Harris, contemptuously; "so it seems. 'Pon my soul, Fred, I wish you'd keep away, you make me savage. Think! no, you won't think, or don't think, or can't think. People say there's no harm in you, and I believe they're right in one sense, and that your wits have all gone to whisker."

"Thank you," said Fred, good-temperedly; "much obliged. Pray, old fellow, if it's a fair question, what does your barber make a year out of that moderate Iscariot of yours?"

Harris Morley seized his crisp black beard with both hands, tugged at it angrily, looked at the *non-chalant*, happy countenance before him, and then laughed aloud.

"Come, that's better," said Fred.

"There, I beg pardon," said Harris; "but I'm put out to-day, and I felt vexed at your upsetting that stuff."

"Come now, that's rich," said Fred; "why, you knocked it out of my hand."

"Or I should have had to fetch medical assistance, to try and bring you back to life again; and perhaps the effort would have been in vain," said Harris, solemnly.

Frederick Dean shuddered as he listened to the cold, impressive words.

"That essence was the fruit of months of careful investigation, and I doubt whether chemist ever before obtained it in such purity and strength. You had a narrow escape, Fred; but I am to blame for leaving the things so exposed. Still, I did not expect that you would be so childish as to meddle."

All this while, like a fine clear oil, a portion of the spilt contents of the little bottle was floating upon the water lying on the boards, and dripping slowly through a knot-hole into the space between the floor and the ceiling of the bedroom beneath—that of Blanche.

"Well, there," said Fred, good-humouredly, "I won't touch any more. But, 'pon my word, old chap, you give one quite a shiver. Was it worth much?"

"Yes, it is costly," said Harris; "but it is the time and care I regret. And besides, I may try a dozen times and not be so successful with my experiment: my chemicals may not be so pure, or a score of things may happen to prevent it. But there, pass it over. It's done; but so sure as you had once inhaled the contents of that bottle it would have been a struggle between you and death, and I'm afraid to think of the end of that fight."

"Job for the doctors, eh?" said Fred.

Harris nodded.

"But that puts me in mind of why I came up," said Fred. "The doctor's downstairs with Blanche, and he started me off. Think she gets better?"

Harris Morley did not answer, but stood gnawing a tuft of his great black moustache, and gazing uneasily at the young man before him, who was tapping a retort with his cane as it hung from the ceiling by a string—tapping it round and round till it spun swiftly, when, striking it rather too hard, it

shivered to atoms, covering his rich brown hair with fragments of the excessively thin glass.

Harris started, while, shaking the glass from his person, Frederick Dean directed such a comical look of chagrin and amazement at the student that he could not refrain from a smile.

"Come here, Fred," he said, quietly, as he moved towards one of the windows. "I want a word with you. Pooh, nonsense, man," he continued, as the dragoon drew his purse from his pocket, and made as if about to pay for the damage.

"But, 'pon my soul, Harry, I am sorry. Here have I been ten minutes in this room, and done no end of damage. I'll pay, you know."

"Nonsense! Put up your money," said the other, "and come here. Do you know, Fred, I don't like your coming here so much to see poor Blanche; and as her only protector I am obliged to speak to you as her father would have done."

"God rest him for a brave soldier, Harry!" said the other earnestly, his face slightly flushing as he spoke. "What a man he was!"

"And it seems to me," continued Harris, not noticing the interruption, "that it would be better you should not visit so often now you have come back from the North."

"And why not?" said the dragoon.

"Why not?" said Harris, sternly; "why, because, if I must speak plainly—though I do it without thought of gratifying your self-esteem—because it would be better for the poor girl's peace of mind. I am not blind, Fred; and I can see the poor, weak child's vanity and silly fancies. She is ill and feeble enough now; and if you trifle with her, it might produce after-consequences on her finely-strung nerves—consequences that, as a frank-hearted man, as I believe you to be, you would regret to the day of your death. Don't break off at once, but by degrees."

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.

And Manchester and Liverpool.

The Chemist:

A SEQUEL TO JACK LAW'S LOG.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER IX.



HMUST if you wish it, Harry; but why should I?" said the other, seriously. "The poor little thing likes me to come, and enjoys my society. And really, old fellow, it's all platonic, and that sort of thing; and why should we make her miserable?"

"Will you act as a man of honour and feeling, Fred?" said Harris.

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said the other, with a puzzled look—"that is, you know, if it aint too hard. Let me do it by instalments—a bit at a time, you know."

"That is what I ask you," said the other, smiling in spite of himself.

"But you know, old fellow, I don't see why we should bother ourselves. I'm not very grand as to brains, I know; but I seem to like the little, weak, dark-haired thing. I can't explain it all, you know. You've got a fellow up in such a corner, that one seems obliged to speak; and what I like in Blanche is her little, helpless, trusting ways. She don't chaff and snub me, and all that sort of thing, like other girls do."

"But looks up to you as a very Hercules or Apollo, and adores you as the perfection of human kind, eh?" said Harris, smiling.

"Well, taking that with water, yes, to a certain degree," said the dragoon, complacently. "You pitch it a little too strong; but, then, that's your way—you must have everything up to the very extreme. But set aside joking, you know, Harry, I think she does like me; and, as I like her, and she'll get better, why, what's the good of bothering!"

"There, for goodness' sake come down," cried Harris, with a puzzled look upon his face—half vexation, half amusement.

And taking the young man's arm they strolled out of the room together, Harris banging the door after him, when the shock made a bottle totter from its place above where the pool of water lay and fall

into its midst. The large stopper fell out, and the contents in the shape of bright crystals began to glide forth like large grains of sand, till a little heap lay upon the wet board—a heap which went on dissolving slowly and flowing into the knot-hole, and through into the open spaces between the joists. A slow process, but much of the salt deliquesced and spread amidst the cracks of the boards, while the odour which arose was strange though unnoticed. Bright grains flowing, changing colour as soon as they reached the water, and then gradually disappearing—there was something startling in the way in which this, one of nature's secrets, was taken up again, hidden, concealed, in a way that would have taken long testing and a weary process to win it back a bright crystal from the little thread of solution which, newly augmented each instant, made its way down the knot-hole in tiny drips.

As the dragoon entered the drawing-room, he caught sight of Blanche, hiding a little brush with a looking-glass back, and said, leaning over the back of the sofa—

"I caught sight that time. Mermaid's tresses, eh?"

Blanche made some reply in a low tone, and then began watching her brother, who, evidently uneasy in mind, sat reading till the Lieutenant took his departure; when the very first hint at the object of his unusual stay produced such a storm of weeping from his sister, that Harris gave it up impatiently, standing at times looking angrily down at her, and then muttering, "Spoiled child! spoiled child!" he began pacing up and down the room.

Harris felt that his was a hard task. Willing to accord every indulgence to his sister, he could not lend himself to giving way in a case where he felt that the duty of Mentor was needed. Wild and vain to an excess in her ideas, he saw now that the weak girl had given way to an inclination which she ought to have possessed enough of common sense to see would most certainly be upon one side only; and yet, from probably sheer love of self, the careless, light-hearted young soldier had flattered and fostered this inclination on the girl's part, till Harris suddenly awoke to the fact that he ought to have exercised his prerogative of guardian some time earlier.

But he was fully aware now of the danger, and ready to compliment himself for his foresight and the bungling way in which he had broached the subject.

"I must be watchful," he said aloud, pacing the room the same evening after Blanche had retired for the night. "Yes," he said, "I must be watchful."

And resting one arm upon the chimneypiece, he stood thinking, till he turned sharply, for a hand was laid upon his arm, and, carefully dressed, Mrs. Levigne stood beside him.

She saw his wondering gaze, for it had always been her custom to leave with Blanche, when they met no more till the morning at breakfast.

"You want my help, Mr. Morley," she said, softly.

And he, ignorant as a child of wile and cunning, answered frankly as soon as he had recovered from his surprise.

"Do not think me intruding, or that I presume upon my position in coming to you, and if I am wrong pray forgive me; but you are uneasy about your sister," said Mrs. Levigne.

The soft tones, the time, the quiet interest in his affairs—all seemed to have their influence upon the young man, and he again responded frankly. Mrs. Levigne was gaining her point, and establishing a quiet understanding with Harris Morley—the citadel she had determined to sap in some way or another. And now circumstances seemed to have conspired to bring about the first step towards her success, and it was not until a quiet earnest conversation had lasted for quite half an hour that the drawing-room door opened, and the scared pale face of Blanche appeared; for unable to bear the suspense longer, and certain in her own mind that Mrs. Levigne was with her brother, she had made her way downstairs, and softly opening the door had time to see both the housekeeper's shapely hands resting upon her brother's arm before they were removed.

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Levigne, advancing softly towards her, and wreathing her arm round her waist. "Let us go upstairs again."

"No!" ejaculated Blanche, sharply.

But the next moment, with a shiver, she resigned herself to the arm round her, and suffered herself passively as a child to be led from the room; while as they passed the door Mrs. Levigne turned and met the look of Harris Morley with a glance of such mingled triumph and power, that the young man was for a while startled, and stood watching the closed door in a state of bewilderment from which he could find no way of extrication.

Meanwhile Blanche, with the arm still round her, feeling in its firm, cold inflexibility like an arm of stone, toiled slowly and painfully up the stairs, the lids of her eyes quivering, and her teeth set to hide the emotion which shook her frame. There seemed to be a strange fascination in her companion, and vain were her efforts to shake it off. She battled hardly with it, and had Mrs. Levigne been stern or angry she felt that she could have defied her; but no—her every word was smooth and courteous, even tender, while she was lavish of her attentions.

"Doctor Anson has sent you fresh medicine," she said, bringing forward a bottle and glass, and measuring out the prescribed quantity. "Let me see you take it."

"No," said Blanche, hoarsely; "put it by my bedside, and I will take it when you have gone."

"Better now," said Mrs. Levigne, persuasively.

"No," said Blanche, more firmly; and the matter was not pressed.

Half an hour after, in the next bed-room, Mrs. Levigne started, for she fancied that she detected the sound of a slight snap; but after listening eagerly for some minutes she continued undressing, and was about to extinguish her light, when she fancied she detected a slight grating noise. Another five minutes' keen attention; but the hollowechoing rattle of a cab was the only sound she could hear, when she relaxed her vigilance.

Early the next morning the slumbers of Blanche Morley seemed to grow troubled: the pleasant dreams in which she had passed some hours be-

came overclouded, and a shudder ran through her frame, as she woke to see Mrs. Levigne, who the moment before had been glancing at the drained wineglass, asking how she had passed the night.

CHAPTER X.—A HORSE-LEECH.

MRS. PIKE had gone to pay a morning visit, and having left her orders with Turner Pike, that gentleman was busy washing—that is to say, he had been busy washing a portion of his linen—to wit, one shirt, two pairs of stockings, and a red cotton pocket handkerchief. It was Mr. Pike's habit to be his own laundrer, a habit in which he was encouraged by his partner, though from delicacy of temperament she never followed the example with the light articles of her own wardrobe, but consigned them to the care of a neighbour in Ammoniamews, whose dwelling was over the stables of No. 5, and blessed with a kind of linen gallows which projected far over the mews, and whereon gibbeted articles of clothing swung in a ghastly manner, to the great horror of timid horses, who showed their fear by "a most shaking themselves out of their harness," so said a sage helper. But Mr. Pike had his own peculiar drying-ground, for he was not allowed to make use of either kitchen or sitting-room fire, for fear of the Captain smelling the steam; and Mr. Pike's drying-ground was a slate furrow in the soot-fertilized district, among the roofs of the houses—a place where the stormy winds did blow-o-o-o-o-ow at all times and seasons; and here, upon a line stretched between two blank-looking stacks of chimneys, Mr. Pike dried.

Upon the morning in question he had just taken off his cap, and was smoothing his short hair, which looked like a grisly skull-cap held in its place by a pair of whisker straps reaching half-way down his cheeks, and of the same colour as the cap, while a ragged pair of strings were continued beneath his chin, and there tied in a rough scrubby knot. Mr. Pike gazed complacently upon the fruits of his labours, and admired the bulky shirt, which, thoroughly inflated by the wind, looked as though it might have been the property of Sir John Falstaff himself; while the red handkerchief snapped and fluttered about like a signal, in spite of the dejected pendulous appearance worn by the two pairs of stockings.

"That's him!" suddenly exclaimed Mr. Pike, lowering himself quickly through the trap-door in one side of the roof, and reaching the top landing to hear the lodger yelling furiously for hot water, ringing the whole time without cessation.

"What a blessing she is not at home!" muttered Mr. Pike devoutly, as he meekly bowed his head to the fury of the Captain's storm, supplied him with all he needed in the shape of toilet necessities, wondered what sort of a regiment his was, and in what foreign legion he had held a commission, and congratulated himself upon not having had the honour of having served under him.

Many little things conspired that afternoon to make it late before the Captain reached Great Barestreet, when he raised his eyebrows and blew out his cheeks on seeing a tall, stalwart figure swagger out of the house, and saunter slowly along the pavement towards the corner where the cab-stand began,

when a look was sufficient to bring a hansom to his side.

The Lieutenant had just thrown himself back in his seat, and was looking up to the driver, who in his turn was looking down upon his face through the little lid in the roof.

"Jermyn-street," said the Lieutenant. "Look alive."

"All right, sir," said the man, when the Lieutenant started and stared, for a heavy foot was on the board, and a well-known face thrust almost into his own.

"What, going westward? Just right, and I'll accept a ride," said the Captain.

"Might have asked if it was convenient," muttered the dragoon, sulkily making way, and allowing the Captain to squeeze himself in.

"Ah! but I know the tenderness of your nature," said the Captain, with a grin, half-hidden by his hand.

"Been a capital thing for you, my fine fellow," said the dragoon, sulkily.

"Pooh! nonsense!" said the other. "Give you your revenge to-night if you're a good boy. Don't be peppery now; I've got a thing worth having for the Northern Handicap. Now, what do you say?"

"I'm going to drop all that sort of thing," said the dragoon. "I can't afford it; so don't get showing me any of your confounded winners."

But the Captain would not see the manifest disinclination of his companion to be friendly. In fact it did not answer his purpose, or, as he would have expressed it, he could not afford to take notice of the slights.

Finding at length that the pachydermatous animal at his side was impervious to hints and other light artillery, the dragoon growled, grumbled, and subsided into his corner, fencing and parrying all the "good things" his companion was so eager to introduce to his notice. But that was not surprising, for the Captain's attacks were all directed at the young man's pocket—a pocket which, as a rule, he was very careless of guarding; but this day, for some reason, he was parrying and turning aside the Captain's thrusts in a way which staggered that worthy.

All at once the baited one pushed up the lid of the cab with his stick, and gave a fresh order to the cabman, who drove up Bond-street and drew up at Long's.

"I'll say good day here," said the dragoon.

"Oh, no; don't trouble yourself," said the Captain, jocularly. "I suppose you mean a chop, so I'll join you. That'll do, cabby; we sha'n't want you again."

If the thoughts of Frederick Dean could have been put into words, they would have had a garnishing of strong oaths amongst them; for he was staggered at his companion's assumption, and his cheek flushed as the angry words leaped to his lips—words that it required a strong effort to crush down, for he could not help thinking of the folly attaching to a quarrel with such a man as the one by his side. The idea was dimly dawning upon him that a raid was intended upon his purse: an adjournment after dinner to some gambling-house or another, when wine had

been doing all it could to mystify his never very clear intellect—a plan that he determined to thwart, as, with a contemptuous, good-humoured smile upon his lip, he led the way into the hotel and ordered dinner.

And capital company was the Captain, leaving out, as he did, any little vulgarism that he thought would be too jarring to his victim's mess-room sensibility. So that, at the conclusion of the repast, the Captain threw himself gracefully back in his chair, thrust a thumb in company with the corner of the table-napkin into his waistcoat armhole, and held up a glass of claret to his eye, smiling pleasantly the while, as one who was enjoying the fruit of his labours; while the dragoon, languid and semi-somnolent, rested his long person upon three chairs.

The Captain smiled, and sipped his claret; but he had been pocketing so many affronts that afternoon that his pockets were replete; and though these petty annoyances were out of sight, yet they had corners, and they gave him gentle reminders of their presence. But there was something else tended towards making the Captain more thick-skinned than ever—he had seen Frederick Dean leave the house where the woman whom he had married under a false name lived, and he wanted to learn more.

The second bottle of claret made its appearance, for the dragoon was too comfortable to move, and the Captain's stories were, for want of something better, agreeable after dinner; while the narrator was waiting his time, and therefore exerted himself to his utmost to please his entertainer. He would gladly have asked a few questions at once, but one or two hints thrown out were barren of effect; and he waited, knowing from old experience that after another hour or two the dragoon would be as so much plastic clay in his hands.

The second bottle of claret was ended, so was the Captain's last story, and so was Frederick Dean's determination to shake off the Captain; and now, as he rose and shook himself, yawned, stretched himself before the fire, and then good-temperedly paid the bill, he was so liberal to the waiter that the sleek gentleman in black would hardly let either him or the Captain go, so eager was he to smooth out the wrinkles in their overcoats. Attentions, these, with which the Captain would rather have dispensed, for they drew attention to the state of his wardrobe, of which, though he had made the most, the most was not much. And now the dragoon was quiet and complaisant, and submitted quietly to the fat arm of the Captain thrust through his own as they strolled along the gas-lit streets towards a quiet house, which was ready to open its portals upon a summons being given in a particular manner.

Not at all a peculiar house—only quiet and well furnished, and where, on reaching an upper room, four shaded gas-lights shone down in a pleasant glow upon the agreeable green of a billiard table, across and across which, with now and then a gentle click, rolled the red and white ivory balls. No harm there, only a quiet game of billiards—a game being more and more introduced, with its kindred baga-

telle, for a pleasant wet-day pastime in our own homes. No harm here, and the Captain and his pigeon seated themselves upon one of the raised banks to watch the progress of the game, while claret-cup, coffee, and cigars were handed round by a quiet-looking servant. After a while, three or four more gentlemen strolled in, and one or two more games were played; when, at a given signal, two of those present busied themselves for an instant or two beneath the pockets of the billiard table, a clicking noise was heard, and then, several willing hands being ready, the whole top of the table was lifted off, turned carefully, replaced upon the frame; and, still with a green cloth round it, there was a handsomely polished mahogany wheel, and the ball sent rolling to a very different game.

The proceedings were according to the old system so often dilated upon: money was staked, won, and lost, in little sums at first, and plenty of light talk and badinage was in vogue; but by degrees the stakes grew higher, the players more earnest. Now and then a loud expiration would be heard to issue from between some loser's teeth; then again a bitter imprecation; while ever came the clinking of coin, and the stillness of hushed expectation. Words short, sharp, and distinct, again and again, as of one directing the game; men who had hung back for a while now joining in; others drawing back with calm, satisfied smiles, evidently determined to play no more that night, but to rest content with their winnings, and then hovering about the edge of the vortex till they were drawn in, and borne round and round once more, following the movements of the ball with the rest. Eager eyes, swollen veins, trembling hands that were wet with a strange sweat, and parted slowly with the coins that they held; cracked lips, firmly set teeth—all the well-known features to be seen beneath shaded lights which shed a softened radiance upon green cloths spotted with gold that is clutched eagerly, or parted from grudgingly.

A noise—sharp, angry words—raised hands—the little crowd parting; and two men, the one heavy-featured and inclined to stoutness, the other tall, handsome, and flushed with drink, struggling together, while a dozen hands were outstretched to separate them.

"He struck me—an assault—I'll have satisfaction," blustered the Captain, clinging to Frederick Dean.

"Loose your hold of my coat, you swindling dog, or I'll throw you out of the window!" roared the dragoon.

"You hear that, gentlemen!" shouted the Captain.

Frederick Dean had been trying hard to free himself from the clutch which the Captain had upon him, and finally, after a short struggle, he knocked him down.

CHAPTER XI.—A POLICE ONSLAUGHT.

"WHAT a hard head the beast has got!" said the dragoon, coolly, as he took out a white handkerchief, in one corner of which were his initials worked in black hair, and applied the cambric to his bleeding hand. "I warned him times enough."

"I'll be even with you for this," said the Captain

from the floor. "Damme, I won't be insulted like this for nothing!"

"Take it into court," said a tall man, with a sneer. "Try it on for damages, Captain."

"You be d—d!" growled the Captain, sitting up, but not trying to rise.



"Here, quick; look sharp!" whispered the man who had fastened the door, "and lend a hand here."

Three of those present seized the table, turned it dexterously; the fastenings slid easily into their places; cues were caught up, and one man began rubbing the leather with a piece of chalk; another flew to the marking-board; the balls rolled and clicked; and, as some one beat heavily at the door, the marker cried the state of the game—

"Twenty-seven—seventeen!" and then, as the door was tried again, he went to it, and with one movement turned the key and threw the door open. "Only sticks," he said to the new comers.

The new comers were a sergeant of police and a couple of his men, another being on guard outside, and again another watching the back of the premises.

The police seemed evidently surprised, but took great care not to show it, and lost no time in making a careful survey of the apartment in which they were, aided, apparently under protest, by the proprietor of the room, who maintained a dignified silence, after having informed the sergeant that his solicitors would take steps to investigate the causes of his intrusion. But the sergeant merely gave him a look in reply, and which seemed to say, "Ah, we understand one another, so don't be put out."

The next room was examined, and then an adjournment made upstairs, the Captain having sulkily placed himself at the little sink, where soap, towel, and water enabled him to remove a few traces that clung to his features; and now he stood glaring malevolently from face to face, while the game of billiards progressed as if no interruption had taken place.

Frederick Dean kept his injured hand in his pocket, and returned the Captain's glares with the utmost nonchalance, apparently feeling quite at his ease as to the injury his late adversary could inflict upon him, even though he seemed boiling over with wrath.

Sundry nods and looks passed between the inmates of the room while the police were absent; and all trace of the nefarious proceedings had been so carefully concealed, that it seemed evident that the officers would be at fault; and, however the place had been betrayed, they would have to depart, keeping a watchful eye upon it until some better opportunity offered.

"Thirty—twenty-seven!" cried the marker, as the police re-entered the room, and the sergeant, evidently very uneasy in his mind, looked round from face to face, and from article to article of furniture, in the evident hope of detecting some criminal evidence. But he looked in vain, and would undoubtedly have taken his departure with his mission unfulfilled, if the Captain had not come forward—all the while, however, taking care to place a considerable distance between Frederick Dean and himself, a distance in which he also contrived to have the sergeant of police.

The proprietor of the room watched his motions with an uneasy eye, and more than once seemed about to address him; but a glance at the sergeant told him that any such act would excite suspicion, and he remained watchful of the irritated Captain's proceedings.

He had not long to wait, for, with a glance of triumph at the dragoon, the Captain caught the police officer's arm.

"Call in your men. I'll show you how you've been gulled."

At the same moment the proprietor of the room made a leap at the Captain's throat, and a blow was struck at him from behind with the butt end of a billiard cue. But the sergeant's arm saved the attacked party from the advance in front, while the blow, luckily for the captain, only fell upon his shoulder.

Sauve qui peut was then the order of the time; but a signal from the sergeant brought in his assistants, and in the struggle which ensued Frederick Dean found himself hard set with a stout policeman, for he had not the slightest intention of yielding peaceably. Three or four of the inmates of the room had already made their way into the lobby, and thrown up the window, which looked upon a long range of leads; while after his companions had made their exit, one luckless wight had been pounced upon by a policeman just as his quarry was upon the sill, and very naturally the policeman seized upon the first portion of a garment that offered—experience having probably taught him that a mass of writhing bone, muscle, and flesh was hard to hold. So the policeman caught savagely at the victim's coat.

Woollen cloth is but woollen cloth, even though it come from the shop of a Poole. It will only bear a certain stress, and coat-tails were never meant to bear man's weight—the reverse, being, of course, the case. The consequence was, that the cloth

split right up the back, and the constable held his prisoner suspended ignominiously until assistance came, and he was dragged back into the lobby, furiously shamefaced.

But, in the interim, the struggle in the billiard-room had been sharp; and, but for extraneous assistance, Frederick Dean would have been saved the unpleasantness of appearing at a police-court upon the following day in company with four more of the party; for in the heat of the tussle, the Captain, who had been watching his opportunity, suddenly sprang at the young man's back, just as he had forced the policeman away, when, held tightly by the arms which pinned his own, resistance was useless, and he surrendered at discretion.

As for the men connected with the place, they conducted themselves most stoically, as bit by bit the renegade Captain pointed out the various secrets of the house; the sergeant so far unbending from his official starchiness as to chuckle and rub his hands from time to time as the various ingenious contrivances for eluding the vigilance of the law were laid bare; but, on the whole, he comported himself with that admirable sternness so fully developed in the disciples of Colonel Henderson; and when the room had apparently no more to show, cabs were fetched, and preparations made for the removal of the prisoners.

"There is my card, policeman," said the Captain, arranging his hat a little more on one side than he usually wore it, and holding the slip of pasteboard to the sergeant.

"Much obliged, sir, and for all good offices," said the sergeant, with a good-humoured smile; "but hadn't you better come with us?"

The Captain looked at the representative of order



with his eyes assuming a lobster-like prominence. He then scowled, puffed out his cheeks, twisted his heavy moustache, and seemed to be trying to frown down the sergeant—an effort, however, productive of so little effect that he soon after gave it up in

despair; for the officer drew his face up a little, so as to bring prominently into notice the marks and wrinkles placed there by experience, and then, raising one eyebrow a shade and depressing the other a trifle, he threw his head a little on one side, and met the Captain's look with such coolness that the ferocious glance was turned and blunted upon the mask of worldly forging, and the informer lost confidence.

"But I can come on in the morning," said the Captain.

"Oh, yes, of course, sir," said the sergeant, with a smile; "but then a gentleman of your many engagements might be wanted elsewhere; and then, look at the inconvenience of the thing."

"Don't let him slope, sergeant," said the proprietor of the room.

The person addressed turned round and slightly altered the brow over his right eye before he looked again at the Captain, who seemed too indignant to do more than swell visibly as he scowled at the speaker.

"The Captain knows me, and I know him," said the sergeant.

But for all the existent knowledge he did not appear disposed to part from so important a witness; but contrived that he should occupy similar lodgings to the prisoners taken that night, and one result was that, under an assumed name, Frederick Dean was heavily fined; the Captain not considering it wise perhaps to proceed further then, and make known his adversary's proper family and position in society, since morning had brought back to him a part of the worldly prudence wanting on the previous night.

CHAPTER XII.—TWO QUEENS.

FREDERICK DEAN made no scruple about telling the Morleys of his adventure at the gaming-house, and, as he said, he came out in the finest moral style upon the subject. He had sown his wild oats, gathered in the crop, and the last upset was the threshing out of the aforesaid oats, so that in future he was going to lead a life that should immortalize him amongst his relations for all generations to come, and make him the *beau ideal* of a modern officer.

"Shan't do it all at once, you know, Harry," he said; "but if a fellow aint too stupid, I fancy he may get to almost anything."

Blanche smiled, while her brother looked up from the review upon which he was engaged, and gave a kind of snort that might have meant anything, from anger to contempt.

"Don't be uppish, old fellow," the young man continued. "Not very encouraging that towards a chap that has set his mind upon reform. Rather hard, isn't he, Mrs. Levigne?"

That lady smiled, and then looked earnestly at the person spoken of, who, evidently moved by the desire to see the effect of the question, looked up again, and met the earnest gaze directed at him, till, half puzzled, his eyes fell, and he turned to Frederick Dean, who was now leaning over Blanche and chatting to her of the last new opera; and then Harris Morley's brow knit as he thought of his

position, and, not noticing how eagerly he was watched, he became moody and taciturn for the remainder of Frederick Dean's visit. For he was angry with himself and with all around. He had been angry now for days past, and had spoken but that very morning almost rudely to Mrs. Levigne, who crossed her hands meekly, and turned her large, lustrous eyes, swimming in tenderness, slowly upon him, with so gentle and reproachful a look, that he was more puzzled than ever; and the dawning of a strange fancy seemed breaking upon his mind.

CHAPTER XIII.—MOVES IN THE GAME.

"FRED," exclaimed Harris Morley, excitedly, as they were all in the drawing-room one evening—"Fred," he exclaimed, shaking his finger at the young man, as if threatening him, as he lolled back on one of the couches, evidently very happy and comfortable, while Harris stood with one hand upon the chimney-piece, earnest of countenance and deep in the subject upon which he was conversing.

Blanche was there, watching with half-closed eyes the countenance of the young soldier, and from time to time glancing at Mrs. Levigne, who, her hands resting one on either arm of her chair, listened eagerly to every word that fell from Harris Morley's lips. The discussion had not awakened much enthusiasm in the breasts of two of the listeners, for Frederick Dean had mentally declared it a bore, and only engaged in it because he saw no prospect of having a quiet chat with Blanche; but Mrs. Levigne sat with a warm flush upon her cheek, and her heart beating as the young man warmed up, and eloquently told of the various results of his researches into the secrets of nature, showing the enthusiasm of his spirit in the impassioned tones in which he quoted the discoveries of the men great in science—names, he had just told the Lieutenant, that he considered far nobler and more worthy of honour than those of any warrior who had slain his thousands, or, David-like, his tens of thousands. And Mrs. Levigne's face flushed as she listened, and felt the greatness of this man's soul; that she was but now learning to fathom the depths of his heart, and beginning to see how utterly different he could be to the generality of men with whom she had come in contact. Once she sighed involuntarily, but none the less bitterly, as she thought of her own blank life, and the dream of folly of its early womanhood—of her blind adoration of a man whose utter soullessness now startled her, and made her feel contempt for her past.

"Fred," exclaimed Harris, "if you would think, you would see that everything in creation has its appointed purpose; and even the earth, or dust by the wayside, is compounded of elements that startle while they surprise. Uses! everything has its use, though in our ignorance it may not yet have been discovered."

"Ah!" said Fred, languidly, "that's just it, old fellow; I've often wondered what I was made for."

"Pooh!" from Harris.

"But I have really, you know; but I suppose it's from the ignorance you were talking about, for, 'pon my soul, Harry, I can't find out of what earthly use I can be."

"Fred!" exclaimed Blanche, reproachfully.

"Fact, I assure you," said Fred. "I think it was a great mistake and a tremendous waste of stuff—I do indeed; for I really am of not the slightest use, except to spend money and smoke cigars. What a pity it is there is no war, so that I could bowl a few fellows over before I got shot! Oh, come, I say," he continued in a whisper, leaning over towards Blanche, whose eyes were tearful and brimming over, "I didn't mean to hurt you, little one, 'pon my soul I didn't; but it really is as I say."

Blanche laid her little white hands upon his lips, and said—

"How soon will Mary and Maude be home do you think, Fred?"

"Don't know at all—soon, I s'pose. Why?"

"Because," said Blanche, dreamily, "sometimes I think I shall be jealous of them, and that you will care no more to come and see me; and sometimes I fancy that I shall never see them."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said Fred, cheerily. "And now I shall go. I shall be affronted because you put no trust in me."

"Oh, yes, Fred, I do; but—"

"Now, look here, Mrs. Levigne," said Harris, turning towards the housekeeper with a good-humoured smile upon his face; "you hear this stalwart son of Mars talking in this self-depreciatory strain? To hear him, a stranger would think that he was a simple butterfly-existent creature, without a shadow of understanding."

"Well, so—" exclaimed Fred; for Blanche had ceased as soon as her brother began to speak.

"Hold your tongue, sir!" cried Harris; "and—no; you are not going. You deserve a few words of censure for what you have been saying. Take hold of his hand, Blanche, and keep him till I have finished."

Blanche playfully twisted her handkerchief round the stalwart fellow's arm, and held the ends; while, with a serio-comic expression, he sat there, wrinkling up his forehead, and putting in a word or two of dissent when he had a chance.

"I don't like so much self-abasement," said Harris, "and as one of our friends, Mrs. Levigne"—he said this with some *empressement*, and it was acknowledged with a bow and look that made Blanche wince—"as one of our friends, Mrs. Levigne, I don't like an old playfellow to occupy a wrong position in your eyes."

"Confound him!" said Fred to himself; "I wish he'd hold his tongue! I don't want the woman to think either one thing or the other about me."

"I can't refrain," said Harris, "from telling one or two of his gallant acts."

"No; I say, don't be a fool!" cried Fred. "I beg your pardon, ladies, but I really can't sit here and be painted to such an extent as that. I couldn't bear it, you know."

But Harris, with two strides, was behind him, a hand pressed upon each shoulder, and keeping him down in his place.

"You must excuse me, Mrs. Levigne," said Harris—"I only understand a little of the etiquette of chemistry, nothing of that of the drawing-room; so, as I am brought away from my own den to dwell

in a sphere for which I am most unfitted, you must excuse me if I am *brusque*."

"Well, Blanche, if that be not fishing for compliments!" cried Fred.

"Silence, sir, while I tell my story," said Harris.

"No, come, I say—don't!" cried Fred, energetically. "You'll make me blush like a great girl."

"Go on, Harry," said Blanche, smiling.

And then, seeing the eager countenance of Mrs. Levigne, her own wrinkled up, and she regretted having spoken. But her brother was quietly looking at Mrs. Levigne, and saw not the pained air of his sister, nor the anxiety with which she leaned back, once more looking from face to face; while Harris narrated the Lieutenant's gallant behaviour more than once when life had been in peril: how upon one occasion he had been passing a burning house where a child yet remained shrieking at one of the upstairs windows, while below it the smoke was pouring forth in volumes. He had immediately rushed to the door; for the fire had only just been discovered, and the inmates made their escape.

"The child—the child—save the child!" half-a-dozen people were shrieking as they ran backwards and forwards, while two men immediately seized Fred as he made for the door.

"You can't go, sir, it's folly. Wait till the escape comes; it's sent for," said one of the men.

"And see the little one roast?" said Fred, coolly taking his cigar from his mouth.

"But you'll be burnt to death, sir," said the man.

"What matter?" said Fred, coolly; "I'm insured in the Sun. Stand back!" and before they could recover from their surprise, one was sent staggering one way, the other another."

"Hold hard there!" exclaimed Fred, interrupting the narrative. "Let me tell it myself, for goodness' sake; or if it goes on in that snowball fashion it will grow so huge that I sha'n't know it again."

"Go on, then," said Harris, smiling.

"Well, you know," said Fred, "I couldn't stand there and see the people acting like a set of howling monkeys, while the little thing upstairs was nearly driven mad with fright; so I did run in, and made my way through the smoke as well as I was able, and pretty fast too; and you know I got up as well as I could fumble my way; for if there is any part of a house where a stranger can find his way, it's the staircase. You know you only have to keep on lifting up leg after leg, and setting them down again, and you go on like fun. But in a case like this, of course I put double power on, and I'm afraid to tell you how many stairs I covered at a stride, for fear you shouldn't believe me. The smoke was terribly dense, certainly, and I can't say I liked my position much; but then, having begun, of course I felt bound to go on; so, stooping as low as I could, I made my way up to the second-floor, and rammed in the door."

"Now, you know, I hadn't seen a spark of fire yet, nor yet the flash of a flame, but I could easily understand that, as friend Harris calls it, there was 'combustion' somewhere; and, 'pon my word, Blanche, it almost seemed like being present at one of somebody's most successful experiments, when his glasses go off bang, and one has to flee

coughing and sneezing from the room. I fully expect that I shall have to come here to his rescue some day; but only fancy taking such a creature in one's arms and carrying him downstairs!"

"As you did the poor child you found in the



second-floor room of that house, after crawling in upon your hands and knees," said Harris.

"Well, you know, after taking the trouble to go up all that way, you would not have had me leave it, would you?"

Harris gave a start of vexation.

"Why, what is the good of talking like that, Fred, when you know that yours was as gallant an action as ever a man performed?"

"No, I don't," said Fred, coolly; "but I do know that it was an awful nuisance, and I felt like those unhappy ambassadors of the court of King David, as if I should be obliged to tarry at Jericho until my beard was grown. I had one side regularly singed off, Mrs. Levigne, as I was coming down, and, you know, it was such a precious long time coming again. It was bad enough to have to wait once for one's beard, without having to go through that suspense a second time."

"What a confounded puppy you do try to make yourself out to be, Fred!" exclaimed Harris.

"Just so," said Fred; "and now I must go."

"No; finish your story first," said Harris.

"Story! Well, haven't I? Why, I got hold of the squealing little scrub, tucked it under my arm, and then stood on the landing, looking upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's chamber for a way out of my difficulty. Well, I thought to myself, I always did expect to have to stand fire some day, but not to this tune; and really, you know, it was a pretty sight to see the flashes of light darting through the smoke, and leaping up at you, though at such a time you can't seem to thoroughly enjoy it—any more than one could enjoy a bull-fight, being the bull, you know, which I suppose isn't an apt simile. Well, you know, seeing how unpleasant it looked down-

wards, I made a start upwards, and then— Here—look—what's the matter with Blanchey?"

Harris darted to his sister's side, for she had fallen back, and lay quite still, with her eyes closed, and her face changed from its usual pallor to one of a strange, deathly hue.

For a moment Mrs. Levigne sat motionless, the carmine flush gone from her face, to leave it as pale as that of Blanche; but her hesitation was past directly, and she was busy loosening the poor girl's sacrifices to fashion, chafing her hands, and holding a vinaigrette to her nostrils.

But for Harris, Fred would have sought half the doctors in the district, in his excitement and dread that the fainting fit was of a serious character; but in a few minutes a sigh made those attending to the poor girl redouble their efforts, and she soon unclosed her eyes, and looked wildly round, shuddered as her glance fell upon Mrs. Levigne, and then, recognizing Fred, stretched out both hands to him, while a pained air seemed to come shadow-like across the face of Harris, till his eyes met those of Mrs. Levigne, when it passed away.

"I'm better now," said Blanche, smiling feebly; "but I often turn so now. I must ask Mr. Anson to change my medicine."

"Leave it off for a day or two," said Mrs. Levigne; "I think you take too much. I am no lover of doctors, and think you would be better without so much of their assistance."

"Go now, Fred," whispered Blanche; and then dreamily to herself, "I don't think I shall see them. When do you think Mary and Maud will come, Harris?" she said, pettishly. "They ought to have been here by now, and they know how ill I have been," and she spoke in a fretful, childish tone.



"Sailing-ships come at a very different rate to the mails, my dear, and when winds are contrary they are often driven far out of their course. They will be here all in good time," said Harris.

"It don't seem like it," cried Blanche, angrily.

"They ought to know I want them, and I told Mary so when I wrote. Haven't you heard anything more, Fred?"

"No," said Fred, "I haven't; but then that's not surprising. The old Major wrote to me when he



was just about to start, and since then it's not likely that he would have any chance of sending another of his short military orders. Do you know, I'm half afraid of meeting the old fellow; for if he's one-half as much of a martinet in daily life as he is in his letters there will be no living near him. I wonder whether he'll bring a nigger with him, to make curry and mulligatawny according to native rule and precedent. What a savage, though, the old chap must be, after living away from England for five-and-thirty years! That's foreign service with a vengeance. Can't say that I should like it. Let's see, though; didn't you say I was to go, Blanche?"

"Yes; but stay now, I'm better, and Mrs. Levigne is going to give us some music. I wish I could play well."

"So you can," said Fred, in a complimentary tone.

"Hush!" said Blanche with her lips as plainly as could be, but no sound came.

And then she signed for the dragoon to come and sit close beside her upon the couch, while, as it were, yielding to the sick girl's request, Mrs. Levigne swept across the room towards the piano, where Harris Morley was already arranging the music-stool, and drawing out the Canterbury to seek for some favourite composition.

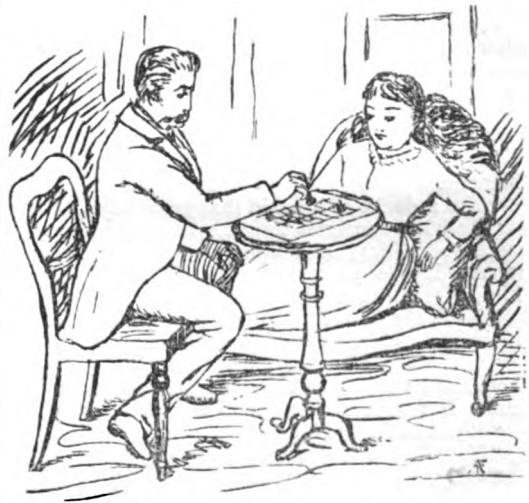
And there was a certain savour of triumph in the air with which Mrs. Levigne took the music from the hands of Harris Morley; but it was mingled with a strange diffidence and shrinking, while her cheeks slightly flushed again as she leant over the

stool and lowered it a trifle. The next instant her hands were sweeping over the keys; but she stopped suddenly, and crossed to where Blanche lay; and leaning over the back of the couch, she seemed to fascinate the girl, who submitted to her embrace and kiss, as she asked whether she could do anything for her, and whether she would like to have the music, or whether it would be an annoyance.

Blanche murmured a few words in reply, and then Mrs. Levigne glided back to the instrument, Harris turning over the leaves of the music; while, as soon as they were unnoticed, Blanche's face took its old pained air, her hands joined supplicatingly together, and she looked pitifully at Fred.

CHAPTER XIV.—BLANCHE AND HER KNIGHT.

HESTER LEVIGNE had laid her plans, and furthered them with all the fervour of her strong, passionate will. It was but a barrier of sand laid down to stay the torrent, that opposition which from time to time Blanche threw in the way. What was it that she spoke to her brother of the maidens over the sea, when a stern sense of duty forbade his harbouring further thought of them than as friends—forbade his thinking more of Mrs. Levigne than as the calm, lady-like woman who evinced so much care for his invalid sister? And yet gratitude had crept in strongly, and made itself a home in his breast; while with such a nature as his, when the seed had once rooted where would be the end of its growth? Blanche saw all this with the keen intellect of the thoughtful girl who had spent endless studious hours alone, and yet she shrank from telling her brother her thoughts; though had she spoken her words would have been unavailing, since the



young man was ignorant of the hold the house-keeper already had upon his heart.

For her hold was great, though as yet Harris was in ignorance of his bonds. He slept, like Gulliver, in peace; and only had he tried to wrench himself free would he have discovered how number-

less were the tiny frail ties by which he was bound—frail ties, but in the aggregate sufficient to control him.

For Mrs. Levigne's was a subtle spirit—a spirit devoted in its every energy to the one point of making him her slave; and endless were the devices exercised.

From this, by slow gradations, it came that when Blanche had lain down for an hour, Mrs. Levigne took her work upstairs, and sat in the laboratory, where she was always welcomed with a smile.

But now another change had to be made. It seemed necessary that the old servants should be parted with, lest they should make remarks upon the altered state of the household; and though Blanche raised a feeble voice of opposition, the changes were effected quietly and speedily, though the girl shed many a bitter tear in secret; for Mrs. Levigne's unflinching tenderness completely disarmed her when her spirit rose in opposition. More than once Harris had spoken angrily at her want of kindness towards the housekeeper, while she sought in vain for an excuse to give, since she knew that she had but suspicion and a sense of dislike for causes.

"Is not Mrs. Levigne most kind and attentive?" Harris would say.

"Yes—yes," said Blanche, wearily.

"And does not your distant way seem unjust to one who so tenderly nursed mamma?"

"Don't blame me, Harris, please; I can't help it, indeed I cannot. I know what you would say," she exclaimed, interrupting him as he was about to speak, "and I have no excuse to make."

And then she burst into tears, and looked so utterly miserable, that Harris began to pet and soothe her, as if she had been a little child, till Mrs. Levigne came.

But Blanche succeeded better with Fred, who, after the night when she fainted, constituted himself her champion, listened to all her doubts and suspicions, sided with her in everything, and promised her faithfully that, if he could help it, Harris should never marry Mrs. Levigne.

"It is that she means, isn't it, Fred?" said Blanche.

"Not a doubt of it," said that gentleman.

"And if he marries any one at all, of course it ought to be Mary or Maude; and he knows I wish it, and it was poor mamma's wish, and I know Major Dean expects it."

"Well, then, we'll make him marry one of them, Blanchey. Which shall it be?"

"Oh, Mary, of course," said Blanche. "I think from her letters that she seems the most suited for him. But what can you do to stop this influence?"

"What can I do?" said Fred, staring.

"Yes; how can you manage?"

"Why, bless your innocent little heart, I can't do anything with him. You must do all that, and I'll back you up. You be general in the campaign, and I'll act as *aide-de-camp*."

Blanche sighed, for the hopes she had entertained of Frederick Dean's ability to counteract the present order of things fell to the ground; and she felt that, however willing he was to side with her, he would only be of avail in a subordinate capacity. He was

willing enough to aid, he said, again and again, if she would lead; and then, seeing Blanche turn to one of the glasses and begin arranging her hair, he took advantage of the lull in the serious conversation, and, walking up to the chimney-piece, began to study his own aspect very minutely. In fact, he had been burning to do so for some time; but Blanche had called him to her side as soon as he entered the room, and he had given up the point. But it was rather a serious day with him, for he had on a new black surtout, and he was doubtful regarding the fit, though his tailor had vowed that it was perfection, and his was a figure he could not fail to fit. There was a suspicion, though, of a crease under the left arm, and a bit of a screw in the back; but of these points he could not feel sure, on account of his attitude, for he was compelled to twist a little to catch a glance of himself over his shoulder; and he did not feel disposed to condemn the tailor unjustly.

"Don't be so vain, Fred," exclaimed Blanche, suddenly, as she caught sight of what he was doing.

But the next moment she blushed deeply, and the flush mantled in her forehead, as she saw the amused expression of his countenance.

"Now, I do call that cool; but never mind, I won't tease you, Blanchey. By the way, lend me that little brush of yours for a moment."

Blanche was off her guard, and drew forth the little ivory-handled toy with its mirror back, and held it out to the Lieutenant.

"How vain I am—am I not?" said Fred, laughing as he took the brush, which Blanche tried to snatch back; but he held to it, and then began arranging his long silky moustache until Mrs. Levigne entered, when he hastily stuck the toilet appendage into his pocket.

But though Frederick Dean declared his inability to cope with the matters on hand, Mrs. Levigne, apparently by instinct, knew that he had entered the lists against her, and crossed swords with him at once, treating him as an ally of Blanche, and opening upon him the same artillery as upon her—artillery against which he seemed worse than helpless, and at the termination of one visit he told Blanche his opinions.

"I'd better stay away, Blanchey," he said.

"Why?" said she.

"Because I shall be safe to go over to the enemy if I stop. What can a fellow do with such a woman as that? I'm afraid of her; I am, 'pon my word. I don't like her, you know; but it's awful—she seems to turn you round her finger."

"Oh, Fred!" cried Blanche, pitifully.

"Fact, 'pon my word. I sha'n't come, you know; but really I had no idea it was half so bad. I don't wonder that Harry is floored, for she'd floor any one. She's a regular winning horse, you know. I can't do anything, you see. Sorry all the same for poor Harry; but really, you know, if she means to marry him, why she will; and there'll be an end of it."

"But, Fred," cried Blanche, passionately, "it must not be so. I dare not let Harry have her. I have a strange dread come upon me every time she is near me, and I cannot cast it off. I've tried again, and again, and again," she said, wearily; "but it will come back, and I can't bear the idea of

it. Oh, do—do write and try to hasten them home; it seems my only hope is in them. Mary Dean could do what we cannot."

"Yes," said Fred, "no doubt. Now, that's very reasonable, now, aint it? And do you think it likely for a moment that one of those girls would come and show fight at your Mrs. Levigne directly she comes home, so as to oust her for the sake of some one they neither know nor care for?"

"Fred!" cried Blanche.

"Well, how can they, only by letter? and what are letters but great bores? And if there's any one thing worse than reading a long crossed letter, I believe it's writing it. 'Taint likely, you know; and if they are high-spirited girls, such as I take them to be, they'd shrink back in a moment. While, as to writing to them, how can I? Why, what a little unreasonable piece of humanity you are!"

"But you must help me, Fred," said Blanche, coaxingly.

"Well, of course I will," he said; "only you must not be unreasonable, and expect too much. It's no joke, you know, to try and get between two people who have made up their minds to do something stupid. Why, as soon as ever you put yourself in the way, there you are with two enemies—one on each side—ready to tear you to pieces. It's bad enough in any case, but to get between two marriageable people—no thank you! I am rather thick-headed, I know, Blanche; but that comes a little beyond thick-headedness. A fellow would need to have been made with a head perfectly solid to do that. Hadn't you better let it be?"

"Better let it be!" cried Blanche, passionately, "and see our every hope destroyed by an artful, designing woman! Oh, Fred, she's a regular cat—so sleek, and smooth, and treacherous, patting you with those horrid white paws of hers! I—What?"

"Can't say I should much mind it," said Fred. "Got rather nice hands, I thought."

"Oh, Fred, how can you!" whimpered Blanche; "I'm always afraid that there are sharp claws underneath, and that she will tear me."

"Pooh, nonsense!—not she. Things aint so bad as you think, you know; only taking your pussycat allegory, don't you call it, and carrying it out, it seems to me that you don't manage her right. You get stroking her fur the wrong way, and teasing her. Well, of course, that aint the way to deal with her. You should pat her, and be pleasant with her, and stroke her down smoothly, when she'd purr, and do everything you could wish for. Swim with the stream, Blanche."

"Oh, if I had but some one who could understand me!" said Blanche, pitifully.

"Well," said Fred, "I can if you speak plain English. But of course I can't see all sorts of horrors, and dreads, and things in people without cause. She's a fine woman, and uncommonly civil—a leetle too civil, if anything; but there's no mistake about one thing, and that is she means Harry safe enough."

"But, Fred," whispered Blanche, laying her hand upon his arm.

"Well?" she said, smoothing his beard.

"I'm afraid of her, Fred," she whispered.

"Well, not to be backward, Blanche, so am I;

for I don't know what to make of her, and that's a fact. She means something, and I can't see what; and those sort of people always do startle me above a bit, for there's no knowing where to have them. But there, you've no cause to be afraid of her; I thought you a match for any woman living."

"I don't like to name it to Harry, for fear he should think me silly; but I really don't like her giving me my medicine, and more than once I've thrown it away of a night."

"What! do you think she's like that woman at the opera—what's her name?—Lucrezia something? There don't be silly, we've got past all that sort of thing, and, besides, I can't see what she should want to poison you for, eh? What would be the good?"

"I can't quite see yet," said Blanche, quietly, and in a dreamy way.

"Why, botheration, you are taking it quite seriously!" cried Fred, laughing. "There, for goodness' sake don't be so childish; and as to the physic, I should take that just as much as I felt disposed, and no more. If you don't like her to give it to you, why, take it without, and tell her not to bother herself, or I will tell her so for you."

"No, no, no! Pray, pray don't," cried Blanche, her face becoming more drawn and agitated than ever. "Don't say a word to her, Fred, pray."

"Why, you poor, pale, trembling little bird!" cried Fred, tenderly taking her hands, "you are as cold and nervous as it is possible to be. There, don't give way to such baby nonsense, pray. Oh, there, I've done. I won't call it anything without you wish it. Why, what a weak morsel it is!" he continued, looking lovingly down upon the fluttering captive he held, while her pale face flushed, and her eyes half closed, as, after trying to draw her hands away, she suffered them to rest in his great white palms.

"Fred," whispered Blanche, at last, "promise me one thing."

"Fifty, if you like," he said.

"No, only one."

"And what is it?" he said.

"Why, that I named before—that, come what may, you will try and stop this marriage."

Fred whistled softly.

"It is the only request I make out of the fifty, Fred; and whether I live or die, I want you to try."

"Whether you live or die! What nonsense to talk in that churchyard fashion. Well, there, I'll promise; and now you feel better, don't you?"

"Yes," murmured Blanche.

Long were the hours at times that Blanche Morley lay sleepless, and listening to the distant rumble of the greater routes of traffic—rising and falling, now almost dying away, to awake again into a hoarse roar, as if the slumber of the monster London were fretful and fevered, from which it turned at times to groan or grumble; and then, when some more raging fit than usual came on, started up, sullen and angry, to bellow forth its anguish. Sleeping, rousing up, then silence; when Blanche would begin to doze; but only to be again startled by the roar of the monster.

Thoughtful till weary with thought she had lain

one night, weeping at times at the state of affairs in the house; fretting for her helplessness and at the length of time which seemed to elapse before the coming of Major Dean, which event she looked upon as one that should bring with it a change. At times she thought it possible that she might be disappointed; but still her faith was strong, and she remained hopeful, cheered on by her young enthusiasm.

At times, too, she would try to think whether she could bear with Mrs. Levigne, when looking upon her in the light of a sister; but the very thought made her spring up in bed, and wring her hands, while hysterical sobs came from her tortured breast. No mock sentimental tears accompanied them, but the drops of real misery wrung from an aching heart.

Two o'clock had struck by the time-keeper in the dull, old, oak-panel church in the square close by—the church where a dull curate preached on Sunday afternoons to a congregation of about ten—when Blanche started and sat up in bed once more, for her door was quietly opened, and, clad in a long white dressing-gown, Mrs. Levigne entered, and stole softly up to her bedside.

Too much alarmed to speak, Blanche sat shivering and waiting the result of the visit, while the usual fear which she had of Mrs. Levigne now seemed increased tenfold. What did she want? Why had she come to her room in the dead of night? Was she walking in her sleep? Fifty questions of a similar nature coursed through her mind as she sat trembling, with the cold perspiration standing upon her face.

"Not asleep, Blanche?" said Mrs. Levigne, as she stood beside the bed; but for the moment no answer came. "Are you ill, my child?" she said again.

"No," gasped Blanche; "but why have you come?"

"Did you not call me?" said Mrs. Levigne, in a surprised tone.

"No," said Blanche, recovering somewhat from her tremor; "I did not call."

"Lie down then—you seem uneasy," said Mrs. Levigne; "but try to sleep." And, leaning forward, she kissed the poor girl upon her forehead, while Blanche, trembling still, but angry, repulsed her. "I will sit here till you are asleep," said Mrs. Levigne, calmly, and taking not the slightest notice of the girl's impetuous, half-wild way; "I will sit here?"

And she took the chair by the bedside, glancing as she did so at the medicine glass on the table, just discernible through the dim light, and as she stooped she could see that the contents were untouched.

"Are you asleep?" said Mrs. Levigne, after a quarter of an hour's silence.

"No," exclaimed Blanche, abruptly. "I can't sleep with you sitting there."

"Tell me about Major Dean and his daughters—what you think of them," said Mrs. Levigne.

"Think of them!" cried Blanche—"think of them as sisters; and," she exclaimed, passionately, "Mary will be my sister, for Harris will marry her."

And she started up in bed again to face Mrs. Levigne.

"Lie still, you foolish, excited child," said Mrs. Levigne, calmly. "What if he does? So much the

better. He will marry whoever he pleases; is it not so? Better be single," she said, with a sigh. "I am a widow, and so can speak."

"You are deceiving me," cried Blanche, angrily, and speaking in a hoarse, quick tone. "But I can



see all—all! Do you think me a child because you call me one? Do you think I will stand by quietly and see you steal my brother from me? I can see all, I tell you, and you shall not succeed; for I will fight against you to the last."

Blanche stopped, breathless from excitement, and half astonished at her own audacity. She had expected an outburst of rage from the woman of whom she stood so much in dread; but to her surprise a cold hand was laid upon her forehead, and she was gently pressed back upon her pillow; while Mrs. Levigne, with a cutting, sarcastic laugh, whispered—

"You foolish, romantic girl, what have you got in your head? You are excited and unwell. Lie still; don't strive. There; I am stronger than you, and it is for your good."

And then there was a slight struggle as the strong kept down the weak, and Blanche's breath came in panting sobs as she vainly tried to sit up, and at last lay passively upon her pillow.

"You had better take a little more of your medicine," said Mrs. Levigne, quietly.

And leaving Blanche she went to the window, and softly drew up the blind, when the faint light from outside stole into the room and enabled her to see to throw away the medicine already in the glass, and pour out a portion of mixture from a graduated bottle, and take it to the bedside.

But no sooner had she left her than Blanche had sprung up in bed again, and eagerly watched Mrs. Levigne's every movement, till she stood once more beside her pillow; when, as the medicine was offered to her, the agitated girl stretched forth her hand to take it as of old—but only to shudder, and snatch the hand back once more.

"Little coward!" said Mrs. Levigne, mockingly, "shall I take it for you?"

"You dare not!" hissed Blanche.

Mrs. Levigne started; but the next moment she had lifted the glass to her lips, when, leaning forward, Blanche by a hasty movement struck the glass from her hand, and it fell upon the carpet, shivered, while the contents were splashed over the bed-clothes.

An impatient ejaculation escaped from Mrs. Levigne's lips, and she stepped hastily towards the door, opened it, and listened. She then stepped out, walked across the landing, and listened against the foot of the next stairs, which led to the bed-room occupied by Harris.

But all was still, though she listened intently for some minutes, even ascending two or three of the stairs in her anxiety; when all at once she started, for above the rustling of her dressing-gown as she was descending, and the hard labouring of her held breath, there came a sharp, loud snap from somewhere below, and again she stopped motionless, and listening intently, for some minutes. Her form could dimly be made out as a pale light stole through the great skylight at the top of the staircase; but though she strove hard to pierce the gloom, nothing was to be seen, while the stillness that had fallen upon the place seemed the more impressive after the sharp noise that had smote her ear. Sounds there were, 'tis true, from downstairs—the faint chirping of the crickets, with which the house abounded; the loud, monotonous tick of the hall clock; while now, as she stood with one slipped foot raised to take a step forward, and her hands holding by the wall to aid her silent movement, there came a sharp, whirring noise, and the musical bells of the clock chimed out three-quarters past two.

Then once more all was silent, and stepping quickly and lightly to Blanche's door, with lips compressed and clenched hands, Mrs. Levigne pressed against it; but it did not give way. She then softly turned the handle, the loose brass ring between it and the door rattling as she did so; but still the door did not yield; while now, like a flash, came across her the cause of the sharp noise she had heard—the lowering of the brass sliding bed-bolt by Blanche, so as to secure herself from interruption; when, in the anger of the moment, Mrs. Levigne struck her hand against the door with a sharp, impetuous action, which was replied to by a low growl from a little pet dog which slept in the same room with its mistress, and had manifested its presence more than once while Mrs. Levigne was in the room by low growls and snaps.

"Outwitted!" she muttered angrily; and stealing softly back, she again listened at the foot of the stairs, and then entered her own room and closed the door, to begin pacing up and down, thoughtfully reviewing what had taken place.

"I must be beforehand with her," she muttered, "and tell him my version. She will not be down till late, and he knows how excitable she has been. Perhaps she will say nothing upon the subject; but I had better speak to make sure.

"Mary Dean," she muttered, after pacing back-

wards and forwards for some time, the inverted tumbler upon the water carafe of the washstand tinkling gently at every step till she hurriedly snatched it off. "Mary Dean—young, handsome, and not rich. But, pooh! he has never seen her; and then his promises. He cannot help himself, for with him his dead mother's request would be law—a law that could never be broken. But suppose I clear the way for another!"

CHAPTER XV.—TRUE MOURNERS.

"WELL?"

"Miss Blanche, sir! please sir!" cried an agitated voice from the landing outside Harris Morley's room.

"Well! what about her?" shouted Harris.

"I can't wake her, sir; and I'm afraid something's the matter."

"Pooh! nonsense!" cried Harris, hastily beginning to dress. "Call Mrs. Levigne, and ask her to go."

"Please, sir," cried the girl in whimpering tones, "I have, sir, and I can't make her hear neither. I've been knocking for long enough at both their doors, and can't get an answer; and there must be something the matter, for Miss Blanche's little dog keeps on howling so that you can hear him here, sir."

The long-drawn, faint howl of the little toy-terrier, which always slept in his sister's room, supported the girl's assertion most strongly, and made Harris Morley hasten his dressing.

"Go and knock again at both doors," he said; "perhaps they will answer now. If not, I shall be dressed in a minute."

Directly after he set his door ajar, while he



finished dressing, and could hear the tapping of the girl's knuckles against one door and then the other; but apparently there was no response, though the maiden's ill success troubled him very little; for he merely thought that his sister was sleeping a

trifle longer than usual; while, as for Mrs. Levigne, as soon as her form filled the scope of his mind, his thoughts became a very chaos, wherein seemed jumbled together his love, his duty, and the many scenes of his life wherein Mrs. Levigne had played a prominent rôle.

He was just slipping on his coat, when he heard a whispering outside the door, and on throwing it open, found the cook and the housemaid looking pale and scared.

"Here, stand on one side!" said Harris, hurrying down two stairs at a time to the second-floor, and knocking sharply at his sister's room. "Here! Blanche! Blanche!" he cried; and the answer was a doleful, long-drawn howl from the dog, whose nose seemed just inside the door.

"Blanche! Blanche!" he cried again, striking lustily with his fist on the panels; and then going to Mrs. Levigne's door on the same landing, where he tapped gently with his knuckles. "Mrs. Levigne! Mrs. Levigne!" he said in a low tone at first, and then loudly; but there was no answer. "Hester!" he cried then—"Hester!" and his voice rose, and he struck heavily upon her door, while the two servants looked meaningly at one another, and from the adjacent room came the long, low, dismal howl of the dog.

"It's very strange," cried Harris, hurrying to his sister's room once more, and rattling the handle and shaking the door as he called loudly again and again, to receive no further reply than that given by the dog, whose howl seemed to change into a moaning sob, as the poor beast snuffled at the bottom of the door, and began scratching as if trying to tear its way out.

"Blanche! Blanche! Blanche!" cried her brother once more.

Receiving no answer, Harris turned the handle and pushed heavily at the door, so that it cracked and gave way a little.

"How does my sister fasten her door?" he said, turning to the maid.

"Only sometimes, sir, with the bed-bolt, sir, which she pulls up when I take her warm water of a morning."

"Stand back, then," he exclaimed.

And, going to the full extent of the landing, he was about to rush against the door, when one to his left opened, and the scared countenance of Mrs. Levigne appeared, pale, her eyes dull and red of lid, while black circles were round them.

"O, come! here's one of the sleepers awakened! We thought something was the matter, Mrs. Levigne," cried Harris. "But here's Blanche gone into a trance, apparently."

It was evident that something was the matter, for Mrs. Levigne stared at him heavily, and passed her hand across her forehead as if to clear away a mist that clouded her understanding; she seemed like one awaking from a stupor produced by some powerful narcotic, and her words were disjointed and strange.

"What is it?" she said at last; and then thought seemed to come back with a flash. "I slept badly till four this morning," she stammered. "I had toothache, and tried some laudanum, to stop it. I

suppose it affected my head. But is anything the matter?"

"Why," said Harris, smiling, "I'm afraid that poor Blanche has had a similar fit, for we cannot rouse her either."

And he went and knocked loudly at her door once more, Mrs. Levigne hastily smoothing her hair, and arranging the dressing-gown she wore, while one of the maids noticed that she had evidently not been undressed.

In the meantime Harris beat heavily at his sister's door, till, finding his efforts vain, he rushed against it, the brass bolt giving way, and the poor dog being dashed, howling, yards into the chamber, where it stood whimpering with a broken leg.

But the dog was unnoticed, for Harris Morley ran to the light undraped iron bedstead, closely followed by Mrs. Levigne, whose foot crushed some broken glass upon the carpet; and there lay Blanche, her head thrown back, and her lips apart, apparently sleeping soundly.

"There, rouse her up, Mrs. Levigne," said Harris, with a smile, turning to leave the room, and stooping to pick up the dog, which looked pitifully in his face, and held up the broken paw towards him.

But, changing his mind, he stepped back to the bed, stooped over it, and gently pressed his lips upon the pale cheek, to start back with a bitter cry, and look aghast at first one and then another.

"She's dead!" he gasped, tearing down the bed-clothes, and laying his hand upon her heart; "dead, Mrs. Levigne! Here, help!—a doctor!"

And he tore wildly from the room, leaving the women standing horrified round the bed, while none looked more scared and startled than Mrs. Levigne. But there was no mistaking the sleep which wrapped poor Blanche Morley, who had evidently been dead for some hours, as was declared by the doctor when he obeyed the hasty summons of Harris.

"Dead four or five hours, sir. Passed away gently in her sleep."

"But of what?" gasped the stricken brother; while Mrs. Levigne held her breath, as, with bended head, she awaited the reply.

"Diseased heart, most decidedly," said the doctor. "We could expect no other, sir; and, but for the attention and care the poor child received, this would have happened sooner."

"But can nothing be done?" gasped Harris.

The doctor was examining the mixture in the bottle, and tasting the contents. It was evidently satisfactory, for he turned again to Harris.

"Done, sir? No," he said, shaking his head; "all necessary was done long ago. It is lamentably sudden; but there is peace upon those features, and the struggle must have been but light. I shall have no hesitation in giving you the necessary certificate, after so long an attendance upon her. No one slept in the same room?"

"No one," said Mrs. Levigne; for Harris was upon his knees beside his sister's couch. "I slept in the next chamber."

"You heard nothing, I presume?" said the doctor.

"Nothing," said Mrs. Levigne; "and I was awake until four with a severe face-ache."

"For which you took laudanum," said the doctor

to himself; "and I hope your digestion approves of it. Ah!" he said, in the loud whisper in which he had previously spoken, "a sad thing!—a sad thing!"

And he left the room.

"Show Mr. Anson out," said Mrs. Levigne, in a whisper to the maid.

And, as she left the room, the other followed with her apron to her eyes, while Mrs. Levigne stood looking with a strange, sorrowful expression in her countenance at the group before her. Once she shuddered; then, again, an air of triumph seemed to cross her face, and she advanced towards the bed; but a glance at the sleeping figure checked her, and she stepped lightly from the room to drop as it were upon the landing, her face buried in her hands, as she crouched together upon the floor, waiting till Harris should leave the death-chamber, for she dared not speak to him there.

She heard whispers from below; doors opened and closed, and hour after hour passed away; but still she stirred not beyond rocking herself to and fro at intervals, and moaning bitterly. The obstacle that stood in her way was removed, but she did not rejoice, for a cold chill was upon her spirit; while the idea, often harboured, of entering the chamber and bringing Harris forth only produced a shudder.

Hour after hour passed, but she did not change her position. Mid-day came, and the servants had more than once crept cautiously up, and seeing her still upon the landing, gone down again. Once the maid had stolen softly by her to reach the upper part of the house; but though her dress brushed the crouching woman's form, both as she went and as she returned, Mrs. Levigne moved not till her step was inaudible, when she started, for a low moan came from the bed-room, and a few muttered words, which made her thrust her hands into her black hair, and throw herself again upon the carpet, where she crouched closer to the door, and lay with her cheek to the floor, as if asking that Harris should crush her head beneath his heel when he left the room.

Yes; the obstacle was removed, but at what a cost! She could feel now, for the first time, that what gave her cause for rejoicing was agony to the man she loved, and every sigh or moan that came from Harris Morley's breast found its echo in her own. She felt maddened at times, and moaned to herself, for she would have given worlds to have passed into the room and taken him to her breast, and mourned with him; but the cold shade of the dead sister seemed between them, and kept her back.

There was a movement at length in the room—a chair was knocked down, and there was the sound of one staggering helplessly about, as if in the dark, and then again all was still for a few moments, while, with palpitating heart, Hester Levigne lay listening for a further sign of his coming.

It came at last, for the door was opened, and pale and with bloodshot eyes Harris Morley was about to step out, when he became aware of the figure at his feet. He closed the door softly, and then stooped to raise her; but she clung to his feet, laying her cheek upon them, and moaning bitterly,

resisting every effort he made, till, stooping suddenly, he wreathed his arms round her, carried her down to the drawing-room, and laid her upon one of the sofas, trying to soothe the passion which burst from her labouring breast.

But the tempest at last passed away; and Harris Morley, surprised and pained at the great love this woman showed for him and his, but reproaching himself for his coldness towards her, as he recalled her many acts of devotion, thought now of her agony of soul and sympathy for this new affliction.

Harris Morley was right; this agony of soul, this strange outburst, was caused by the death of the one whom Hester Levigne had long looked upon as a stone of stumbling in her path; but the depths of her heart, the secrets of its dark recesses, were known but to the woman herself. No amount of calm reasoning on his part seemed to have any effect; for at one moment she would be caressing him, and burying her pale tear-wet face in his breast, the next tearing herself away to hurry from the room, begging him frantically not to stay her when he fetched her back, and implored her to be calm.

Every time he uttered Blanche's name, she started, and peered eagerly into his face, as if to read his thoughts; and then when he had merely spoken of the doctor's opinion, she sank back again with a sigh of relief to bury her face in the sofa cushion. And strange as the time may have seemed for such thoughts, even though he reproached himself for them, Harris Morley felt his heart yearn towards the mourning woman at his side.

An hour after, Harris Morley was in his laboratory, slowly pacing up and down. At times he had stopped to arrange part of its contents, for of late chemistry had been neglected, and half-finished experiments could be seen here and there. The tiny tap which fitted into his filter had evidently been leaking, for the vessel was empty, and a dark patch upon the boards showed how the water had dripped and formed a little lake, whose outlet had been a knot-hole in the floor. The furnace was black and cold, while dust lay thickly everywhere; but Harris Morley saw it not, and when he touched beaker or test-tube, it was in a quiet abstracted way, which showed how far off were his thoughts.

At last, towards evening, he prepared to descend, for a message had been brought him an hour before that Lieutenant Dean was below. He went down slowly, pausing by Mrs. Levigne's chamber, for he heard a stifled sob as he was passing. Then all was silent once more, and he had reached the stairs, but only to return, and gently turn the handle of poor Blanche's door and enter the softened twilight of the apartment, closing his eyes as he did so, and muttering as he stepped towards the well-known position of the bed—the bed to which he had so often carried her years and years before. And now he stopped, with his breath coming thickly, and his heart palpitating, for again a sigh smote upon his ear, and a wild and overwrought fancy whispered him of strange mistakes that had been made—of trances whose intensity had deceived the skilled scrutiny of doctors. And what if this should be such a one, and Blanche yet lived? He turned giddy with the very thought, his head

swam, and a mist passed before his eyes, while had he not clung to the framework of the bed he would have fallen.

Five minutes passed ere the mist cleared away, and he tremblingly gazed upon the bed to see the coverlid drawn over it in a strange weird way, pinned up to the head so as to conceal what lay beneath, but not thoroughly, for the cold hard lineaments of death were to be traced here and there, while one side of the cover seemed somewhat disarranged where it was pinned up highest. But right in the centre of the fair white linen, above where the sleeper's head must have lain, appeared a large darkened spot, star-like in its raying, as if a drop of water had plashed from the ceiling, and had not yet had time to dry.

Drip! There was another right in the same place, darkening again the half-dried linen, while upon the slightly-stained ceiling might have been seen the crack from which the moisture had fallen, and where another drop was forming so slowly that perhaps hours would elapse before it fell.

But the falling drop was not noticed, for again Harris Morley had started upon hearing a faint sigh, almost a groan, and the dew stood upon his forehead as he knew that it had come from beneath the coverlid. But the mystery was soon solved, for on passing round to the other side of the bed, he saw a kneeling form, with its head buried beneath the linen cover, and on going close up he laid his hand upon the shoulder of Fred Dean.

CHAPTER XVI.—PREPARING FOR A CHALLENGE.

"NO news, Fred?" said Harris Morley, as the young man entered his room, anxious and worn-looking, and restlessly picking at the mourning-band upon his hat.

"Yes," he said, gloomily; "news—at last, old fellow, and I think we may get fresh hat-bands."

Harris let fall the beaker into which he was pouring some fluid.

"What?" he said, anxiously.

The Lieutenant pointed, with a sad but meaning smile, to the broken glass upon the floor.

"I expect that's it," he said.

"What! wrecked?" exclaimed Harris, his face growing contracted with the pain of the thought.

"There, for God's sake, don't look like that!" cried Fred. "I can't bear it, old fellow; I never knew before how much you two were alike. Poor Blanche!"

"But what is your news?" said Harris.

"Almost no news," said the other, drearily.

"No news is good news," said Harris.

"Don't talk stuff," said Fred, angrily. "Is it good news to find that the *Burra-Burra* has come into port six weeks after she was due? and she states that the *Cross* sailed a month before her. But there, it's of no use to talk; the case is hopeless, and I suppose the underwriters give her up. There were bad storms in the south soon after she sailed; and it's only three more of our dear ones gone out of the circle. It's a beastly world, Harry, and a beastly life; and I'm sick of it altogether, and if there would only be some war break out that could put one on active service I wouldn't care.

There, don't begin preaching; what's the use? I can't look at things as you do, and the more I try to bear them the worse I get, till I'm almost driven mad. Ah, of course," he growled; "here's someone coming, Harry. Anyone might think I was a huge she, bent on carrying you off, for your Mrs. Levigne takes care I sha'n't stop with you long by myself."

Harris knit his brows, and looked fiercely at the speaker; but the angry glance was thrown away, for Fred was gazing upon the smiling face of Mrs. Levigne, as that lady advanced towards him with extended hand—a hand which the young man just coldly touched and then let fall.

"Better news, I hope, Mr. Dean?" said she.

Fred shook his head drearily, and a load seemed taken off Mrs. Levigne's spirits; but she spoke quiet words of condolence, moulded into sentences of the approved fashion recognised by custom, till the young man seemed to writhe.

"You don't want me here," he said to himself; "but I'll stay in spite of your torture. I'm hard, and I can stand a good deal; and till I see Harris made fast I shall come, offence or no offence."

"No hope, then," said Mrs. Levigne to herself. "All going on as it should; and now to get rid of this fool. I wish he would insult me!"

"Have you made every possible inquiry, Mr. Dean?" she said.

Fred nodded impatiently, and Mrs. Levigne thought that he had risen to go. This, however, was far from his thoughts; for, seating himself again in the window, he drew out a cigar and began to smoke.

Mrs. Levigne looked at him for a moment, as he sat coolly puffing away; then glancing at Harris, with her eyebrows slightly raised, and a half-smile of mingled anger and contempt upon her lip, she shrugged her shoulders, and rose to leave the room.

Harris frowned, for he was between the horns of a dilemma, and everything seemed to point to the position in which he had placed himself, or, rather, allowed himself to be placed; but he accepted his position, and, in spite of a growing dislike, determined to bear it.

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Pedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.
And Two First Prize Medals—
BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,
140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.
And Manchester and Liverpool.

The Chemist:

A SEQUEL TO JACK LAW'S LOG.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XVII.—FRED CARRIES ON THE GAME.



HE next minute Mrs. Leverage left the room, and for a while the conversation turned upon Blanche, and the last time she had been there in the laboratory. Then came a long silence.

"Ever been up there since, Harry?" said Fred, at last, as he jerked the remains of his cigar from the window.

"Where?" said Harris, quietly.

"Up to Kensal Green?"

"Yes, several times; Mrs. Leverage and I."

"Curse the woman!" burst out Fred, savagely; "can't you talk of the poor girl without bringing her in constantly? You know how they disliked one another, and—"

"I know of my poor sister's foolish antipathy to the hand that always tenderly fondled her," said Harris, sternly; "and of course I was grieved to see it—as much as I am now to find that Blanche's folly has found a home in your breast."

"Look here, Harry!" exclaimed Fred; "I'm not clever, I'm not a wise-headed fellow, and if I hurt your feelings, or say things that are unjust, I'm sorry, and no man can say more. But I won't play the hypocrite. I can't stand this engagement of yours. Blanche hated it; and in spite of all the tender attentions shown towards the poor girl, it's my belief that they were not honest. Only prove to me that this woman was earnest and sincere in her love for my poor Blanche, and I'll go down on my knees to her and beg her pardon a thousand times. But you can't do it—you can't prove it. You think her everything that is good and right. We don't—at least, I don't, and I never shall. You're deceived, Harry, and you'll find out your mistake some day—mark my words if you don't. And now I suppose that I had better go, for of course you don't like to be talked to like this by such a fellow as me. It aint natural; and if I don't come as often as I used to, why, you know the reason."

And then Frederick Dean, who had been expecting an outbreak on the part of Harris, stood looking at him with a surprised air, while he sat with his head upon his hand, gazing down upon the floor, quiet and thoughtful, as if he were pondering the words that had been said, as was truly the case.

"Good-bye, old fellow," said Fred at length, holding out his hand.

"Good-bye, Fred," said Harris, quietly, but without moving.

And so they parted.

Rose was the name of one of Fred Dean's dogs; but it was not a rose without a thorn, for, small as it was, its soul was great, and it could snarl as well as its more solid-looking friends. The other "beastly dawg" was the very antithesis of the toy terrier, and rejoiced in the name of "Chops;" and but for the love lavished upon the animals, one would hardly venture upon bestowing so many lines upon their description.

"But," said Fred, "I love dogs, they're such faithful beasts, and the affection they show me is so unselfish."

A remark that one would endorse with pleasure, if one could get rid of the notion of the flesh-pots, and feel that the way to get to a dog's, in fact to any animal's, heart was not through its stomach.

"Chops" had a red velvet cushion to recline upon, while that of "Rose" was blue; and these feather-stuffed pads, the work of poor Blanche Morley, lay one on either side of the fender, and were religiously kept to by their respective tenants. Fred used to say that he could always tell upon which side of the fender he was standing, even with his eyes shut, on account of the fleas; for those insects from the blue pad had a keen, vicious bite; while those from the red only gave a dull knaw. But "Chops" was not improved by red, and undoubtedly straw colour would have set him off to much greater advantage; for he was not at all a handsome beast. His colour was a dirty white; his legs wore the appearance to be found in those of grooms who have lived half their lives upon the back of a horse—they were decidedly bowed; and above his broad massive chest stood up as heavy, blunt, high-browed, broad a head as ever fell to the lot of a clean-joined, muscular, crisp-tailed dog. It is no exaggeration to say that a more ill-looking animal never went at the dewlap of a bull, and by way of recompense had himself sent fifteen feet into the air.

"Well, you see," said Fred, by way of explanation, "I picked out Rose because she was pretty, and Chops because he was so confoundedly ugly, and thoroughly English; he never undertakes anything without carrying it out, and set him at what you may, he sticks to it. Expensive? Well, yes, rather, but he has cost me more for cats than anything. You see, he must have been born with a natural antipathy to the feline race; and in his dog dictionary I've no doubt the name stands thus—'C-a-t—cat: a thing to be shaken to death.' It don't matter where we are, or where we go, if he sees a cat he has it; and then, when once he has hold, he is like a centipede—you may cut him to pieces and he won't quit his hold. Well, no; I never tried certainly; but I bit his tail once, for a fellow told me that was the way to make him open his mouth. It was one day when he had seized an old lady's Angora cat—one of those long-haired chaps, you know—and the old girl was screaming for help. I called, and shouted, and hammered old Chops with

my stick; but, bless you, it was of no use, and as a last resource I took hold of his wretched stump tail, and bit hard, as I held him and the cat up in my arms. Charley Dumont was with me; and if the beast didn't say I put him in mind of a classic group of a fellow playing the bag-pipes, while the yowling and growling of the brutes gave quite an effect to the scene."

Frederick Dean's room was uncommonly like the rooms of young men in a similar position in life— young men without an aim to call forth the intellect they allow to lie dormant, and the abilities they scorn to use. There were lithographs of opera-dancers, in a great deal of stocking and a great deal of nothing for costumes, as they practised the art of making corns on the points of their toes— pictures which Fred did not admire any more than he did those of sundry spidery horses standing in stalls, and looking as if they were greyhounds produced under a Darwinian and Paxtonian process—a combination of a developing and hothouse-forcing apparatus. There were boxing gloves in pairs suspended from nails—gloves which he never put on, because concussions made him vicious; fencing-foils that he never used; rods he never put together; guns he seldom fired; musical instruments he could not play; while as to his books, of which a few were scattered about the room, the less said respecting them the better, for they were, for the most part, rather questionable French novels, which he spelled through by the assistance of a little square "Nugent."

It was about eleven when Fred made his appearance and rang for his coffee, muttering to himself as he did so, "Bound to say old Harry has been up hours, and has nearly blown himself away half-a-dozen times before now;" when he caught sight of the black-bordered letter written upon foreign paper delivered by that morning's post; and on seeing the hand, he seized the thin paper, tossed it in the air and caught it again, crying, "Hurrah! salvation! Now, Mrs. Levigne, I think we can bring artillery to bear which shall overthrow your rule!"

He eagerly tore open the letter and began to read, growing more and more interested as he went on, till his brow became overcast, and he bit his lips angrily, first one and then another ejaculation dropping from his lips as he learned a few of the perils that had befallen his cousins on their homeward voyage.

"And poor unclegone—dead when coming home to find peace and rest—dead, with his sword in his hand, like a brave old soldier as he was! Confound it all!" he cried, excitedly leaping from his seat and striding about the room, kicking books here, odds and ends there, "why wasn't I with them? Why am I always to be leading this silk-ribbon, perfumed, puppy life? It makes me savage. Shot, poor old gentleman! Maid killed, too. Much ill-used, but rescued by the gallantry of one of the sailors. There, as a matter of course, it's what I always said—opportunity. I never had any opportunity; and yet here's a common sailor acting like a hero or a knight-errant of the olden time—acting so that this girl writes in glowing terms of his gallantry. Then why wasn't I a common sailor? Why was I well-born and well-educated?—query as to that,

though—and why did I get a commission in a dragoon regiment? I am, I believe, about the most unlucky brute that ever existed. Get out, you little pampered wretch!" he cried, as he sat down, and Rose leaped into his lap from an adjoining chair; "down, Chops!" he said, giving the breakfast-seeking animal a kick in the ribs, which that amiable creature resented by fastening on the Berlin-wool worked slipper his master wore, drawing it off, and beginning to tear it to pieces.

"Give it up, you brute!" cried Fred, snatching it away, and throwing the animal an agreeable equivalent in the shape of a cutlet from the table. "Poor Blanche! and his fangs have gone right through it."

But the slipper was not much injured, and he replaced Blanche's present in its normal position.

"Gentleman wants to see you, sir," said the slipshod maiden of the house, appearing at the door, and rubbing a not very well-produced nose with the handle of a black-lead brush.

"Not at home," said Fred, sharply. "But, stop—what kind of man is he?"

"Very thin, tall man, sir; and said his name was Sergeant Pike."

"Why didn't you say so at first? Show him up."

The girl disappeared, and soon returned, to usher in the Sergeant, who, however, was not a man in the habit of being ushered in, and who stood stiffly saluting just inside the door, so that it was impossible for the girl to shut it, in spite of the many pokes and hints she gave him of his being in the way; and it was not until, despairing of success without, she had given him so lusty a push forward that he was nearly overturned, and only saved himself by snatching at the table and knocking off the bread, that the door was closed.

"The maiden is strong," said the old soldier, stooping to pick up the loaf.

And then, taking a plate in one hand and his cotton handkerchief in the other—dust-pan and brush fashion—he swept up the crumbs and threw them in the fire, the two dogs smelling suspiciously round his legs the whole time.

"Stop a minute, Pike," said the Lieutenant, referring to the letter once more, and then muttering to himself—"Written from the Cape, and coming home by next mail if Maude is better. Good, then they will be here in a fortnight or three weeks. And now for other plans. And how's the Captain?" he said aloud.

"Captain, sir?" said the old Sergeant, with disgust written in every feature. "I'd just go down on my knees in the dust to save him if he had been the real thing, sir. But he isn't. He's only a beggarly bit of a sham counterfeit bawbee, that won't pass as soon as you give it a ring upon the counter. He's no captain sir, but a rogue and a swindler; and I'd give a year's pension to know that we were clear of him. But he won't go, so long as my lassie believes in him as she does. I daren't say a word to her, sir; and if I did, she wouldn't own to having been taken in. I wouldn't do all this for you, sir, if it wasn't to get rid of him; and he's eating us out of house and home, making us so poor that you can't

tell the shifts I'm put to to get a bit of tobacky or a pinch of snuff."

"By the way, Pike," said Fred, "what regiment did you serve in?"

"The —th Highlanders, sir, last; but I was in the —th in Ingy before that. That's where I got this," laying his hand upon a bare place on his crown. "That was a tulwar did that; but what was that when so many gallant officers fell?"

"Then you knew Captain Morley?" said Fred, excitedly.

"Did I know the captain of my company?" said the old man, firing up. "Didn't I go down by his side?"

"And Major Dean—Lieutenant then?" said Fred.

"Well, sir, well—and he went down too; but he got better at once. I didn't, and came home invalided; but at the end of two years I had the kilt on, and shouldered the musket once more."

"Then you knew my uncle?" said Fred, proudly. "But the gallant old Major is dead, coming home from foreign service."

"Not of some beggarly fever, sir?" cried the old man, anxiously.

"No," said Fred, sadly; "he died as a soldier should die—he was shot down with his sword in his hand."

"That's a blessing," said the old pensioner, devoutly; "and it bothers me, sir, not a little to think that I'm out of it all, and shall go off some day quiet and still like a civilian. It comes of being hard, you know, for I've been through enough to kill most men."

"But you've thought my proposition well over?" said Fred.

"Yes, sir," said the old man—"well; and I've come to say that I'll help you in it all I can. And glad I am to be of service to your uncle's nephew, always allowing, sir, that there's a wee bit selfishness in it, and I'm thinking of myself, too. But how came you to find us out, sir?"

Fred laughed, and as soon as his visitor had gone, he sat thinking quietly for some time, till rousing himself he left his untasted breakfast, and hurried towards Great Bare-street.

CHAPTER XVIII.—FRED'S ADVERSARY.

A WONDROUS power of dissimulation must have been Mrs. Levigne's. Even Frederick Dean was taken aback, and had to ask himself again and again whether he had not been, after all, led astray, deluded by his fondness for Blanche, and ready to accept her opinion with respect to the housekeeper's character. "Is she an angel or a devil?" he muttered to himself, after he had triumphantly read aloud Mary Dean's letter in her presence. "Even if she did not know my uncle's wishes, surely she might have some cause for discomfort, knowing, as she does, that my cousins are both young and beautiful. But no; I suppose she trusts to her powers of fascination—and," he said, "they are great, certainly," as he leaned back in his chair and watched the handsome face lit up with smiles, while Mrs. Levigne congratulated first one and then the other upon the termination of their anxiety. But Frederick Dean would have altered

his mind could he have seen Mrs. Levigne an hour afterwards, when, after lingering over Harris for some time, and watching the progress of his work, she bent down, kissed his forehead, and went to her room—could he have seen her then, with her hair let down as if she had torn it, her cheeks pale, and her eyes hot and red as she paced up and down the chamber, biting her lips and clenching her hands so that the nails pierced into the flesh; now stopping, and then standing gazing into nothingness, as if trying to see her future course.

"What a baby I am!" she muttered, still gazing in the glass, and watching the passion-marks fade from her brow, the colour come again, and her lips look of a deeper scarlet since she had bitten them so cruelly.

The storm had passed, and in the languor which had succeeded, Hester Levigne looked beautiful enough to make her smile again and again, and crush down the fears that had previously assailed her. She called herself fool, child, baby, as she bathed her face; and then, in spite of her assertion that Harris cared not for dress, carefully made use of every little art that the toilet could lend, to add to the grace and beauty with which Nature had so largely endowed her; and at last, after a long gaze in the glass, she swept queen-like from the room, asking herself whether she were not after all but an actress, and whether all her passions were not fictitious. But the shade across her brow, and the shudder she gave, as she stood for an instant with raised hand by the room where Blanche died, had in them nothing fictitious—they were genuine, though evanescent; and, with a smile of conscious power upon her face, she slowly ascended to the laboratory, knocked, and entered.

Harris Morley looked up and started as he saw who entered the room, while a slight shade of annoyance appeared upon his countenance; still he was but mortal, and not the first erring man who had proved too weak to contend with the arts of a syren. His eyes rested upon the noble form before him, meeting her bright glance, and he felt the smile upon her lips was for him, as she seemed to glide over the floor, resting for an instant in his arms, as she raised her cheek to his lips, and then slowly subsided into the chair by his side.

He could not help it; but five minutes before he had been thinking of Mary Dean, and his heart had yearned towards the poor suffering girl; but this movement upon the part of Mrs. Levigne had cast a veil over his former thoughts, and he could live but in the present.

"You will come down now?" she whispered, lifting one shapely hand to push back the dark curls that clustered over his forehead. "I want you all to myself this afternoon; and then I'll be patient and not interfere with your researches for a week."

Harris smiled as he prisoned the white hand in both his own, and forgot everything but the beautiful woman before him, though his thoughts paused once in wonderment that he had been so long before he saw her beauty; and his heart did not tell him that it was because it had not been lavished upon him—that the eyes had not brightened at his approach—the bright flush mantled on the cheek

when he was near—nor the happy smile wreathed the lips to greet him.

Mrs. Levigne smiled, and this smile was not simulated, as she saw him leave with a half sigh the formula and the apparatus with which he had been engaged; but his face brightened again, as, with real interest, she clung to his arm, and asked questions—numberless questions—respecting the success that had attended him that day; and as he talked of his experiments, her lips parted, her eyes grew slightly dim, and she had another proof that, actress though she might be, many of her emotions were most real; for she was dreaming now of a happier time, when really and earnestly she could devote her life to this man, proud of his attainments, ready to give up all that he might be successful, to be truly his helpmate; and, seared though her heart had been, she felt that she could be all this, ay, and more.

Hours after, and she sat alone once more in her bed-room, flushed and triumphant, ready to laugh to scorn the tremors that had agitated her breast earlier in the day. She had gained her point. Harris had thrown aside the vacillation, and they were to be married—to be married soon, without noise or ceremony, almost privately, on account of past sorrows.

"Perhaps it would be better before the Deans' return," Harris had said.

And Mrs. Levigne's heart bounded at the proposition. But that was not settled, only that the wedding was to be soon; and she was content.

And was Harris Morley as calm? No; for he paced his room backwards and forwards long after every soul in the house slept.

He took out the photographs of Mary and Maude Dean from the album he had fetched from the drawing-room, and looked at them long and earnestly. Maude's he soon replaced, in spite of its deep calm beauty; while over that of Mary he bent long and tenderly, recalling the contents of the letter to their cousin, the short narrative of their sufferings; and then he found himself wondering what sort of girls they would be in character. But at last he closed the book with a sigh, making each clasp snap loudly, and then he appeared to rouse himself as from a dream; but only to fall into another, in which he saw Mary Dean looking at him sorrowfully, and accusing him of a want of trust and faith. This passed, though, at last; and he retired to rest, and sank into a quiet, untroubled sleep for a while; but not for long, for his brain became active again, and in a strange, confused way he felt that it was somehow owing to his fickleness that the troubles had fallen upon the Dean family.

So passed the night away, with the sleeper roused every now and then by some vision of his excited brain; and when dawn came, and the sun shone brightly over the sleeping city, he gladly rose and sat by the opened window, looking far over the housetops, far away, for it was clear and bright as yet; and though he had, as it were with the closing of the album, shut out the Major's daughters from his thoughts—though he had engaged himself to marry the woman now sleeping beneath his roof—

there was something in the pure light of that morning that took his heart far over the sea to where the huge steamer was ploughing her way back in obedience to the throbbing engines, and the thoughts of that heart were centred in Mary Dean.

CHAPTER XIX.—FROM PHASE TO PHASE.

HARRIS saw but little of Frederick Dean for some days, and when they met the Lieutenant was abstracted and silent, sitting for half an hour, perhaps, without speaking, and nursing the little lame dog that had belonged to Blanche. But that Harris Morley was too much abstracted, he would have come to the conclusion that Fred had something upon his mind—something which fretted him rather, and seemed to keep him in a troubled state. But no notice was taken of all this, and Fred came and went, greatly to Mrs. Levigne's annoyance; while between him and Harris there appeared to be a suspension of hostilities concerning the marriage—Fred seeming to have let it slip from his mind, and talking only of the return of his cousins.

But Harris Morley was wrong in imagining that the subject had passed from Frederick Dean's breast; for though silent, it occupied his every thought; and though no hint was given, yet he sat in the drawing-room at Great Bare-street a very conspirator, plotting the overthrow of the woman whose piercing eyes seemed bent on discovering the secret thoughts of his heart.

Scarcely a sign, though, gave Fred; and it must have been by instinct that Mrs. Levigne knew of her danger, and acted with all the caution she could command. The smiles and various little arts she had been wont to try now fell like winged shafts from Fred's armour, and he met conversation with a quiet, stolid air that soon tired, while to a certain degree it annoyed.

At last Mrs. Levigne angrily told herself that she was fretting without cause; and Fred's visits passed apparently unnoticed, though she abated nothing of her circumspection.

And now the long-expected visitors had arrived, and Mrs. Levigne, beneath her smiling calm, was terribly agitated. Fred had persuaded Harris, and he had accompanied him to Southampton, where the pulses of both had been stirred when they greeted the two pale, unnerved girls—Mary retaining her self-possession and calmness, but Maude weak and dejected from the effects of the voyage.

Fred had been acting for them, and had secured apartments in Onslow-crescent, where, after a day or two's stay at Southampton, they took up their abode. It was a strange meeting; and Harris felt his heart yearn towards the poor girls, who seemed asking his protection; and yet duty made him treat them with a quiet deference even more chilling than if they had been perfect strangers. Mary Dean was startled, but her woman's nature roused up a spirit of resentment which made her return his greeting with a coldness she did not feel. But for the frank, warm good-nature of Fred, like her sister she would have shown the desolation of her heart, and her disappointment at the reception she had encountered.

But time softened the pang, and, in pursuance of his plans, Fred had called with his cousins once or

twice at Great Bare-street—abusing himself roundly as a sham while he introduced them to Mrs. Levigne, and enjoyed the discomfiture of the housekeeper, though it needed a keen eye to detect the slight distension of the nostril, and the twitching of the eyelid, as she masked her feelings beneath a calm, cold politeness.

Was it instinct on the side of Mary Dean that made the pale girl's beautiful face, looking ten times more sad and interesting in her deep mourning—which made her face wear a strange pained air? Or did she feel that she was conversing with an enemy—with the woman who threatened to make shipwreck of her happiness?

After the first visit, Harris left the room in anger, and Mrs. Levigne felt that in her coldness she had made a false move; while Fred, far from being dull, now went away in the highest of spirits, for he had seen the calm proprietary air Mrs. Levigne had assumed before his cousins, and the way in which she had once or twice spoken to Harris. The manner was assumed to show Mary Dean the relative positions which they occupied; but Mrs. Levigne had gone too far, and Harris bitterly resented the tone she had taken, when he saw the colour come slightly into Mary's cheek. However, Fred did not show the joy he felt in seeing the anger of Harris, and hearing the sharp tone of voice in which he spoke; but his eye met that of Mrs. Levigne once, and the look spoke volumes on either side.

But Mary Dean's was a secret of secrets—one of those that a woman knows so thoroughly well how to keep, even if it be for years. How many fond, loving hearts—hearts rich to overflowing with love's sweets—have slowly pined away, and, dying, made no sign! Mary Dean's was such a one, and she left Great Bare-street that afternoon calm and unruffled to all appearance, talking quietly to Fred, who watched her narrowly, puzzling himself as to what were her real feelings, and as to whether he could enlist her upon his side in the campaign against the enemy, as he termed Mrs. Levigne.

The plans of Frederick Dean, though, grew ripe without the warm partisanship of his cousins; for matters took a favourable turn with him, and, from some cause or another, he walked up and down his own room when he rose of a morning, chuckling and rubbing his hands.

"Time old Ramrod was here," he muttered, referring to his watch.

But before he had returned it to his pocket there was a heavy step upon the stairs, and a sharp decided knock preceded the entrance of Sergeant Pike.

But it was not without considerable persuasion that the old man could bring himself to sit down in the presence of a superior officer, for the old routine clung to him stiffly, from his walk to his speech. But finding persuasion slow, Fred added an order, when the old man placed himself upon the extreme verge of a chair, and furnished his interlocutor with information at will.

Very earnest were some of Fred's questions, and anxiously he sometimes waited for the answers, which came in a slow, deliberate manner, as if the old man had placed his news very far back in his

understanding, so far that much search and trouble were entailed before he could ferret it out and bring it to the surface.

"Must go now, sir, if you'll say 'Dismiss,'" the old man would say, after a short sitting. "Superior officer at home, sir, you see."

"Ah, I understand," Fred would say, with a smile.

And then, apparently only half satisfied, he would take his hat and follow the old man into the street, talking long and earnestly, piling up question after question, till the nearing of the tea-chest mansion necessitated a separation, when Fred would return the old man's stiff salute, and walk back, pondering, and apparently trying to fit pieces of a puzzle together—pieces that he had somehow got mixed. The task would have been easy enough to some minds, but to his it was troublesome, and he always seemed dissatisfied and fretful till he had been to Onslow-crescent, where an hour in the society of his cousins appeared to settle his ideas, so that he would brighten up, then turn dull, and, by way of cheering up the pale, anxious girls, begin to talk of Blanche Morley and her words and ways, describing her aspect and appearance most eloquently; for this was a subject upon which he could always warm up, while, could he but find attentive listeners, his anecdotes were unceasing.

And here he met with no unwilling auditors, for the sisters would sit by him with tearful eyes as he told of his last interview with the poor girl, gliding into her repugnance to Mrs. Levigne, and the strange fancies she had in connection with the housekeeper, of her horror of the engagement, and then quietly and naively he would tell of Blanche's wish that Harris should have married cousin Mary, while the fair girl's colour would slightly deepen, or a faint red spot appear where perhaps all was pale before.

"You don't mind me talking to you about her," said Fred, "of course? And mind, girls, you must not take any notice of me, for I'm very stupid—good-tempered and blundering, and so on, but not up to things in general."

Then he would long to enlist Mary; try to find words that should show her his wishes without wounding her sensibility; but always with the same result—that of determining to act his part without help, succeed or fail, while he threw in energy to try and make up for his want of discrimination and management.

And so matters remained in abeyance, with the various characters herein described in a state of agitation and unwonted excitement; though Mrs. Levigne, as she tried to recover the influence which she felt that the coming of the Major's daughters had weakened, would not own to there being any danger, neither, in fact, did she see cause for fear; since now, whenever they met, Mary Dean treated Harris with a calm, quiet reserve that made Mrs. Levigne rejoice, as she strove hard to retain her usually impassive demeanour.

A stranger would now have supposed Harris Morley to have been one of the most studious of men, from the many hours he spent in his laboratory, while Mrs. Levigne had, during the past few days, found him strangely agitated, examining the room in which Blanche had died, then busy again amongst his

chemicals, testing and making fresh experiments; but every inquiry was met with some quiet, evasive answer, while the brilliant looks of reproach, or the glances of subdued tenderness, had apparently not the slightest effect.

"But I have his promise, and he is a gentleman and honourable," Mrs. Levigne would whisper to herself; and then, heedless of all but her own deeply moved spirit, she would toil on day after day, trying to forestall his every wish—her heart bounding if any act of hers won a smile from his lip, while a few kind words sent gladness coursing through her for the rest of the day.

Still she was watchful, and took her every step, as she thought, with a care that should set failure at defiance; but, like our cleverest schemers, she left one tiny entrance unguarded—the point that there seemed no likelihood of an enemy approaching; but there he came, and her works were sapped to their destruction.

CHAPTER XX.—HOW WILL IT END?

HARRIS MORLEY sat in his laboratory, but the chemicals were untouched. He was half mad with chagrin and the pain of his position.

But what could he do? He was bound in honour to fulfil his promise—the promise he had made in an hour of folly—a promise to be fulfilled at some future time.

Help comes often from sources where it is least expected, and so here; though, when Frederick Dean presented himself in the laboratory, it was only by an effort that Harris could refrain from telling him to go. But a glance at the young man's worn and pallid face, the worry and anxiety imprinted so plainly upon it, made him soften his tone and offer his hand to him cordially, for he recalled his love for the dead sister whose memory seemed to trouble Harris strangely now.

"Don't be put out, Harry," said Fred, after half an hour's hesitation, and converse on subjects foreign to the purpose for which he had come; "but I want to talk to you once more about your marriage. There, don't explode, there's a good fellow," he said, deprecatingly. "I wouldn't speak to you, only I must. Poor Little Blanchey was talking to me about it only the night before—"

Frederick Dean choked, and hesitated not to pull out his handkerchief and use it freely for a few minutes.

"Can't help it, old fellow," he said; "I *am* soft, and I know it. You see, it's being so big, I suppose; but I never could stand the miseries of this life like I can the pleasures. Poor little lass! she was talking to me about it, and begging me to try and stop it, and I did promise her; and then all that put it out of our heads for a while, and then there was the coming back of the poor girls; but I was obliged to take up something and drive away the miseries, so I took to what I know would have pleased *her*, poor darling—I've been running some one to earth."

Harris Morley sat pale and frowning, but he half turned his back to the speaker, and began busying himself with some of the bottles before him.

"I can't help it, old fellow, if you are put out; but, being almost your brother, I must tell you all about it, for, you see, Harry, you've been limed."

Harris started, and looked round.

"Put your head into a noose—that's what you've done," said the other. "Blindly as ever man did yet; but I'm going to cut the string for you, my boy—that is, you know, if you'll let me. No, I sha'n't speak lower, for I'm not afraid of my words being heard; but, perhaps, it might be as well, for I expect you will want your eyes very widely opened indeed before you will condescend to see what I have found out for you. The matter is pretty well ripe now, and would do for anyone else; but I suppose that you will be as hard as you always were, and want no end of convincing. Now, look here, Harry," he said, seriously, "you must not marry this woman."

Harris sat gazing silently at him as he continued.

"And I'll tell you why, old fellow. She has a husband living. There! stop, don't be rash."

"Hush, fool! Be quiet!" hissed Harris, as he held tightly by the breast of the other's coat. "Is that true?"

"True! yes; as we are here, and that you are acting like a lunatic."

"But can you prove it?" gasped Harris, to whom bright rays of hope seemed flashing down.

"Prove it? of course, or else I should not say what I have said. But I say, old fellow, I'd no idea that the wind had shifted round to that quarter. I expected to be half murdered for my insolence at hinting at such a thing, and of course I like this rather better."

"Go on," cried Harris, in an agitated manner. "But do your cousins know of this?"

"Go on," said Frederick Dean. "No; I shall go on no further myself, but prove it all to you step by step, with witnesses whose evidence you will feel compelled to believe."

"Tell me what you are going to do, and how you mean to proceed," cried Harris, at length, rousing himself from the wild musings into which the young man's words had plunged him.

"Do? well, I'm going to take you quietly somewhere and let you judge for yourself. You see I've had an enemy. Not that I'm surprised at that; for it was my own folly that made him, and he has had a piece of paper of mine that I wanted to get back, and hunting him for that brought me into contact with other matters that were of more importance, and so it came about that I got hold of one end of a curious thread, and have been reeling it off ever since."

He ceased talking, evidently expecting some remark from his companion; but as he remained silent, Fred continued—

"It's wonderful how things come out, too, in such matters; here I found a regular good friend in the enemy's camp—a stern, straight-forward old fellow, an old soldier; and the very knowledge that I was in the army seems to warm him towards me, and, you know, if I say to him 'tention,' he draws himself up stiff as a poker, salutes, and answers any question I put to him. What?"

"Are you sure that you are not mistaken over this?" said Harris Morley, in a husky voice.

"Mistaken!" said the other with a quiet laugh. "Well, we'll see."

"But about persons—are you sure?"

"Sure? Yes. I'm sure your housekeeper, *fiancée*, if you like to call her so, visits regularly at the apartments of one Captain Verrey, as he dubs himself—a low, gaming-house tout; a black-leg, a swindler, a scoundrel, that I've thrashed, sir," he cried, excitedly—"thrashed for robbing me; and he is her husband, and holds her in his power, of course; and do you know what that means?"

Harris shook his head.

"Well, I'll tell you: it means fixing himself like a leech, and keeping on, suck, suck, suck, till the victim has no more blood left in him or her; when he'll give 'em a rest, so that they may make ready for the time when he feels disposed to begin again. He had me fined ten pounds once for a gambling transaction—he turned informer—and dreadfully galled I was about it; but I tell you what, it was hundreds in my pocket—I'm not going to say how much, for of course I don't know; but now I come to think of it, it must have been through him that I was always so short of money, for I've felt quite flush ever since, and when I have got that paper out of him, I shall be a happy man; while if I don't, I sha'n't care much if you are freed. Won't you try a cigar, old chap?"

Harris Morley put aside the proffered cigar, and talked long and earnestly with the young man till dinner was announced, to which Fred stayed, greatly to Mrs. Levigne's annoyance. And she, too, looked careworn and agitated.

"She heard part of what I said," muttered Fred to himself; "and 'pon my soul it seems a shame to interfere with her game, for she's a noble-looking woman, and I believe she likes him. But poor Blanchey! what a horror she always had of her! And then about Mary?"

Fred broke off here to shake his head very solemnly, and help himself largely to vegetables.

For Frederick Dean was right—Mrs. Levigne had heard a part of the conversation—though not enough to do more than rack her brain to find out its meaning.

The growing coldness of Harris had not passed unnoticed, and most eagerly had she set herself to watch his every movement, even though each chilling word stung her to the heart.

"To have dared so much!" she cried to herself, as she paced up and down her room at night, her long, black hair floating over her shoulders, and her dark eyes dimmed with the tears that would flow.

Her thoughts at times would be almost maddening—more than she could bear, as she muttered to herself—

"For this—for this to have dared all; to make the way open for another!"

And at such times the veins in the woman's forehead would swell, her lips turn parched, and crack, while her eyes seemed bloodshot. Sleep!—how could she sleep, with her brain throbbing pitilessly, and every nerve bounding as she goaded

herself again and again with the thoughts of the past, and trembled for the future, and the defeat of her plans?

Opiate produced sleep at last—but not coming gently, to steep its seeker in soft slumberous trances before sleep took full possession of the senses; but coming in short spasms, from which Hester Levigne would start up with a faint cry, and gaze around, holding her heavy hair back from her brows, and listening intently, ere with a sigh she turned to her pillow to sleep once more; but in a few minutes to start again, perhaps to cry, "Who called?" and sit up, with the dew standing upon her forehead and shining in the pale rays of the night-light; when again, with a shuddering sigh, she would lie down, perchance this time to sleep heavily for hours.

But once her soul must have been more overwrought; for at the stillest hour of the night, when not even the distant rumble of a cab could be heard echoing along the streets, she suddenly started up, rose hastily as she cast back the white coverlet, and stood pale and ghost-like upon the chamber-floor: a few steps forward, and then a stoppage, with head down, eyes glaring, mouth half open, and nostrils distended—every sense on the strain, as if she listened intently; then to the door, to listen again; back to the night-light, and then, slowly and noiselessly, the faint rays placed behind the chimney-board, to leave the room in darkness only relieved by the softened radiance stealing through the closely-drawn blinds—a pallid light, but sufficient to show the white figure softly gliding across the room, the bare feet noiseless upon the carpet; then the soft click of the door, and, as it rustled over the carpet in opening, sounds from downstairs heard in the stillness of the summer night—the faint chirping of the crickets in the kitchen, while one amorous fellow plays his serenade loudly from some corner in the hall, his stridulation rising quickly and sharply to the listener's ears.

Perhaps—perhaps she hears nothing external; perhaps it is but the working of an over-wrought brain.

These faint sounds of the night are lost upon her as she slowly crosses the landing, leans over the balustrade, and seems to listen; then back to the door on the other side, to turn the handle softly and enter, closing it after her.

The blinds are drawn down here too, and the faint light is barely sufficient to show the white figure crossing the room to the bed, to lean over it and listen, and then whisper three times over—

"Blanche! Blanche! Blanche!"

Faint, soft whispers of the name whose owner once slept in that unpressed bed. But louder cries would not wake her now, though imagination paints the strangely wrinkled young face peering into the muslin-draped toilet glass; and memory recalls the sweetly modulated, plaintive airs she sang.

But the sound awakens not poor Blanche; and the caller's hand is heard to pass again and again over the table at the bedside, as if seeking something that is not there. Then motions as of pouring something from a bottle are gone through; the figure again bends over the untenanted bed; and the name is repeated, to fall only upon the empty

air; and then once more the carpet is crossed, and the door closed.

Strange and wild must at times have been the dreaming hours of Hester Levigne; while day by day, in despite of every care and trick that the



toilet could lend, she grew paler and more anxious-eyed; for there was the fire burning within her breast whose red tongues lick up slowly and surely the soft currents of life; and though effort after effort keeps that fire smouldering, ever and anon a weaker place is found, where the sharp tongue darts and leaves its scar before it is again thrust down.

CHAPTER XXI.—LOWERING CLOUDS.

TIMES were very hard with Turner Pike, and he said that his life was a sore burden. The interest of one or two old officers had procured for him the post of sexton at a neighbouring church—a post which entailed no gravedigging, but merely that he should wear a black gown covered with black worsted tassels, which looked as if they were tufts of a kind of black undertaker's moss growing upon a rusty funeral cloak; and that, when robed in this said gown, which hung most ungracefully upon his peggy person, besides having been made for his predecessor, who was a much shorter man, he should open the doors of vestry, pulpit, reading-desk, and the gate in the communion rail, closing them after the officiating minister, and carry a penny cane and frown at the small boys. Light tasks these for the old man, and tolerably well paid, in coin of which Mrs. Pike contrived to possess herself when the appointed days came round; but, though not arduous duties, as a Presbyterian, Turner Pike complained of them, and once told a brother Scot that his Sundays were now so taken up that he never even had time to attend a place of worship; and he held out his hand before him in an impressive way as he spoke, back up, palm down, as if to confirm his words.

Turner Pike was very short of money, and Mrs. Pike had gone to meeting. Snuff was quite out, so

was tobacco; and upon a hint to that effect being given to Mrs. Pike before she absented herself from home, she had sharply intimated that it was quarterly night at the chapel, and all her spare coin would be required for the minister's offerings, while the Sergeant had not been supplied by Fred during the last few days.

"But a man must have his bit of snuff," said Turner Pike to himself, as soon as he was alone, "and I can't think without a pipe now and then."

So, upon the strength of these necessities, the thin-bladed knife was quickly procured, divers listenings followed, while a loud "Hem!" from the Captain, who was for a wonder at home, made the guilty man start and shiver. Another pause, though, told him that all was right; and stepping lightly on tiptoe, he was about to grasp the box upon the chimney-piece, when a fancied noise made him turn his head, and his next step fell on the drab cat's foot, producing a howl and an outrageous amount of swearing; but as Mrs. Pike was from home, the box was none the heavier for the profanity.

Mrs. Pike was from home; and therefore Mr. Turner Pike, as a rule one of the most exact and regular of men, was about to depart from the ordinary correctness of his movements.

The cat had betaken herself to Mrs. Pike's seat, the one with the patchwork cushion, and there having curled up, forgotten the late assault, caring nothing for the attack upon Mrs. Pike's charity, as awarded for all men in her little circle to see. The night certainly was warm, but it might have been up to a hundred by the thermometer on the old wheel weatherglass, judging by the dew which stood upon



Mr. Pike's face as he turned the box first on one side and then on the other, manipulating and working the thin knife-blade in various directions. He must have been a base worshipper of Mammon, for he was down upon his knees, holding the box above his

head, and peering at the slit, across which, like so many tormenting gnomes, the various coins flitted, but not one would come out. Now it was a George III. shilling, graceful-throated and worn, which peered at him and then slid on, passing beyond the



range of vision; then a William IV. fourpenny-piece slipped by; by and by a George IV. shilling presented its edge, and was about to bound out; but no, it seemed to alter its intention directly after, and was gone into the dark realms, where rolled over and over scores of coins, from farthings to two-shilling pieces. Once, when making preliminary investigations, Turner Pike had caught sight of a half-sovereign; but in his wildest hopes he never imagined that the solitary piece of gold could be brought out. In fact, he would most probably have returned it had it been before him upon the table, the venture being too large, while the possession of so heavy a sum in ready cash would perhaps have led him into extravagances that might have betrayed him; and where would have been his nationality had he shown want of caution?

But this night the fates seemed against him, for, in spite of all his care, not a coin could he secure, until, in one spiteful rattle, out fell a battered half-penny, which in his disgust he thrust back into the slit. The box was heavy with cash, much of it undoubtedly of the baser metal; but, as Mr. Pike dolefully said when repenting of his haste in returning the piece, twelve halfpence make sixpence, and more might have followed. But the pieces would not follow, only gambol backwards and forwards across the slit, and dodge the knife-blade, till Mr. Pike perspired furiously, and shook the box again and again, but without success. At last, though, he gave the box a vicious shake, and at the conclusion found a sixpence resting over the edge of the slit. Only a little care now was needed, and, his face gleaming with the anticipation of the fumes of many pipes, his nostrils distending—rather an unnecessary proceeding—as if to receive pinches

of Scotch and rappee, Pike poked and wheedled at the coin's milled edge, when a sharp knock at the door, and a hasty start above-stairs, undid all the toil, and the box was replaced.

The visitor was admitted, Turner Pike making the least of himself behind the door, as a silk dress rustled along the passage, and its owner, declining to be announced, walked hastily up the staircase to the Captain's room, where she was evidently expected.

Turner Pike closed the door, nodded a good many times to himself, and then returned to the little parlour and took down the box, muttering to himself at the noise he made in so doing; but before the knife-blade had been inserted there came a slight tap at the window, which caused him to hurriedly re-open the front door, and stand whispering with two well-dressed men beneath the gas-lamp hard by. The principal spokesman seemed urging something with the old soldier which caused him to shake his head severely; but the passage of money from hand to hand, and a few words which sounded almost like orders, sufficed, and directly after the three men were in the narrow passage, with the door closed behind them. Pike's next proceeding was to place the flat candlestick he had so well polished that morning just behind the door, and squeeze himself past his visitors, leading the way quietly upstairs towards the room, where voices could be heard as if in anger: the blustering tones of a man, and the deep, fierce utterances of a woman.

Had the speakers been less intent, they would have heard the ascending steps, and the rustling against the slight partition; but there was no break in the conversation, even when, in a loud whisper, the master of the house said, to further exemplify his Scottish prudence—



"And ye found the door open, mind, while I had just gone out to speak to a neebour!"

Frederick Dean replied by pointing down the stairs, and saying—

"Take away that light."

Turner Pike obeyed, and the next moment the Lieutenant stood holding by both wrists Harris Morley, lest in his anger he should dash into the room before he had heard sufficient to prove the assertions made respecting Mrs. Levigne.

"But," whispered Harris, "I hate this eaves-dropping, Fred. It seems cowardly."

"When you are fighting some one in particular, ought it not to be with his own weapons?" whispered Fred, in reply.

And then in silence the two men stood listening to the angry meeting in the room before them, Harris Morley raging with the mingled feelings of love, disappointment, and disgust which agitated him; for at times he could feel that Mrs. Levigne's influence was to a great extent still there, even though the recollection of Mary Dean's sorrowful face rose reproachfully before him. He thought of his freedom, now purchased by the death of his sister, and again of the promise he had made to his dying mother—the promise exacted on account of Blanche's weaker temperament. Thoughts came swiftly, for now there was a pause in the conversation, and the stillness was painful. Then there came a fierce burst once more, and again silence, while Frederick Dean fretted angrily, because so little had been said in corroboration of his words.

It was something, certainly, that Mrs. Levigne had been tracked here, and was now holding an angry meeting with some one with whom she seemed to have been on most familiar terms; but that was not enough, and he waited anxiously for more, not knowing how long he would be able to restrain his companion sufficiently to prevent him from giving the alarm.

But now the words came in loud, hissing, angry whispers, as if the speakers had suddenly awakened to the fact that they might be overheard. Once the listeners started, as it was evident that the male speaker had heavily smitten the table with his fist; for there was the jingling noise of a glass containing a spoon which had jarred with the blow. Then oaths, and a point blank refusal, followed by the noise of a chair pushed aside, and the rustling of garments, as if a female had left her seat.

Frederick Dean felt the wrists he clutched tremble, for Harris Morley well knew the peculiar sweeping noise of those stiff folds, and this time they seemed to bring with them the recollection of a wide staircase, and a pale, trembling figure, half shrinking from the supporting arm that guided her slowly down step by step; and again the old uneasy sense of a shadow blighting his sister's life came upon him.

CHAPTER XXII.—RUN DOWN.

CAPTAIN JOHN VERREY had been impatiently expecting his visitor for some time when she arrived, and, closing the door after her, took a chair in front of him, looking sternly in his face as he made an attempt at politeness, and half rose from his seat.

But it was evident that Mrs. Levigne was too much engrossed with the object of her visit to pay much heed to the formalities of daily life. She was angered, and it showed in her every look; for after

all her long plotting and planning, it seemed that the prey was about to slip through her hands—the prey, for hers was the fierce love almost of a tigress. And now the time had come to act, for she felt that unless she struck boldly all was lost. The Captain had of late forgotten her old warnings and become importunate, asking for money at times when he should have been content with what had been done for him, and then turning insolent and even descending to threats. Hester Levigne had borne all this patiently, waiting her season for action, and, in spite of the high hand with which she had treated him, preferring to use mild measures until such time as she could thoroughly set him at defiance. Until she was Harris Morley's wife she had felt that she was not safe, and that a few words from the Captain would be sufficient to ruin her prospects for ever; but now a vigorous course seemed necessary.

Her first step upon entering the room, then, was to dash some half-dozen letters down upon the table, and to upbraid the Captain with his various breaches of faith; to all of which he replied by half closing his eyes, smiling, and then picking his teeth. But his visitor had evidently come to act, and taking a sheet of note-paper from the reticule bag she carried upon her arm, she laid it before him, and told him to read.

"I'm idle to-night," he said; "suppose you read it to me."

Mrs. Levigne frowned, but took up the paper, and read the few terse lines that it contained, whose purport was that John Danks, otherwise Captain Verrey, had no claim whatever upon Hester Ray, otherwise Mrs. Levigne; that he never had any claim upon her, and that any assertion to the contrary was false.

"Well," said the Captain, "and what then?"

"You will sign that," said Mrs. Levigne, coldly.

The Captain smiled, and changed his toothpick into the other hand.

"I said you will sign that," said Mrs. Levigne, in a cold, cutting voice.

"I heard you," said the Captain.

"And then," continued Mrs. Levigne, "you will receive from me two hundred pounds, upon the condition that you go to reside upon the Continent—Paris, Baden, Homburg—where you choose."

"Very nice arrangement!" said the Captain. "Go on."

"This money you will draw of one of the foreign bankers, as I shall arrange, in four instalments of fifty pounds, spread over six months; while at the end of another six months, if you have kept to your engagement, there will be another two hundred pounds paid to you in full, and in one payment."

"Exceedingly pleasant arrangement!" said the Captain; "and after this year shall have expired?"

"What you will," said Mrs. Levigne, coolly.

"But I mean as to further payments," said the Captain.

"That will be the last," said Mrs. Levigne, quietly.

"Oh, indeed!" said the Captain. "And, pray, what may the prize be worth for which you are planning?"

"I may as well add that I have fully determined upon the amount which I shall give you; and of course you will accept it," said Mrs. Levigne.

"Oh, yes, of course," said the Captain. "Your most obedient, madam. Your slave to command. Shall I start for the Continent to-night, or stay to be best man at your wedding?"

"You start when you choose; but I presume that it will not be long before you set off, when it is taken into consideration that fifty pounds are waiting for you at your journey's end."

The Captain coughed, for there was a truth in the last sentence which he could not controvert.

"My dear Hester," he said, after a pause, "do you take me for what is commonly called a fool?"

"No, John Danks; I take you for what is commonly called a knave," was the reply, in measured tones.

The Captain coughed again, when, his throat being clearer, he said—

"But do you for one moment expect that I'm going to be put off with a paltry four hundred pounds, doled out by instalments, when you are going to gain a pretty rich bargain by my silence? If the money had been forthcoming in one sum, perhaps I might have noticed the offer; but, pooh! preposterous!"

"John Danks," said his visitor, coldly, "I presume by your words that you have played the spy upon all my acts to a pretty good extent. So much the better. Then you will know that I am playing a desperate game—a game of chance. My prize may be great or small; but I offer you a certainty, and one that you will be wise to take—heeding well, too, that you hold to your part of the bargain."

"And suppose I do not choose to take it; what then?" said the Captain.

"Leave it," said his visitor, coldly.

"And you?"

"Never mind me; I can take my chance."

"And suppose I expose you?"

"Suppose you do; what then?"

"Why, all your hopes will be nipped in the bud."

"Precisely; and your four hundred pounds cast into the street."

"And suppose I demand more of you at the end of the year—I mean, if I agree to your terms?"

"You will not get it."

"Then I can expose you still."

"Impossible!"

"Why, how can that be?"

"Because," said Mrs. Levigne, "I shall have told my husband all—all—my life from the first, till I met with a scoundrel who betrayed me with a marriage in a false name, and then treated me as of course a scoundrel would treat a woman. Then there will be nothing for you to expose; and I shall set you, as I do now at this moment, at defiance, telling you that you are a villain and a coward, a mean traitor, whom I could spit upon, but that I think you too base. Take my offer, or leave it; you can do whichever you please. Four hundred pounds for the signing of this paper, which I tell you frankly would be useful in a law court when it is witnessed by the man below. As to my husband, I shall trust to his honour and compassion."

"Make it six hundred, and I'll sign," said the Captain, after hearing the epithets bestowed upon him with the greatest equanimity—not a surprising fact, though, for he was a man who had heard them repeatedly uttered against him in far stronger language, and his meetings with Mrs. Levigne had taught him that she was an altered woman. "Make it six," he said, "and I will sign."

"I have two hundred pounds now left of hard savings; the rest I shall hope to save and obtain from my husband in the interim," said Mrs. Levigne, passing the paper across to the Captain, who leaped up in a mock fury, seized the writing, and crushed it in his hand, as if to rend it to pieces.

"Sit down, fool!" cried Mrs. Levigne, bitterly. "Don't you know me yet? There," she continued; "burn it, and take your chance. I consider my plan worth four hundred pounds. Take it, or leave it. Give me some brandy and a glass."

The Captain surlily took a decanter from a side cupboard, and placed it, with a tumbler, before his visitor, who poured out a small portion and drank it, the Captain all the while watching her narrowly. He then drew decanter and glass to his own side of the table, and was about to pour out some of the spirit; but he first stopped, held the glass up to the light, and smelt it suspiciously, narrowly eyeing his visitor at the same time.

"You are not worth the trouble," she said, contemptuously. "I can buy you at my price without risk, and that is sufficient. I want no more."

But the Captain raged, stormed, and blustered, vowing that he would not be dictated to or bought over. No; he would assert his rights; he cared for no money, but looked upon his honour as of more value than a fortune. To gratify the woman whom he had once loved he would have made some sacrifice; but to be insulted with a pitiful sum of money was too much.

"You are my wife," said the Captain, "and I'll prove it. I'll assert my rights, and stop all your plans."

"Fool!" hissed Mrs. Levigne between her teeth.

"I'll call upon this Morley. Ah, you may flinch. I know all, you see. I'll expose you thoroughly, and vindicate my honour. I'll—I'll—"

He said no more, for Mrs. Levigne had him by the throat tightly, and forced him into his chair, the back of his neck upon the top rail, and her fingers tightening each moment, so that the wretch shivered and struggled piteously, his mouth half opened, his eyes starting, and abject terror making the perspiration stand in great beads upon his forehead.

"Dare again so much as to utter his name," she hissed, "and it shall be your last word! Coward! villain! scoundrel! your lips defile his name, and—There," she half shrieked in her mad rage, as she thrust herself from him, "keep back from me, or I shall murder you."

Tearing herself from him with an effort, as if she too truly felt the verity of her words, Mrs. Levigne, with her countenance distorted, turned away; and then, as if imitating the acts of the Captain, she shrank back cowering into one of the corners of the room; for, stern and fierce, before her stood Harris Morley.

CHAPTER XXIII.—DESEPOIR.

NO words were spoken as Harris Morley stood sternly confronting the woman who had been the evil genius of his home; but as she encountered his cold, bitter look, she covered her face with her hands, moaning pitifully, "Lost!—lost!" and crept close to the wall, feeling along it towards the door, from which Frederick Dean moved to let her pass; when there was a rustling heard upon the stairs, and, before those in the room could act, the door was heard to close.

"What are you going to do?" cried Fred, laying his hand upon his friend's arm.

"Do? Follow her, of course," exclaimed Harris, thickly; "while she dwells under my roof she must have the treatment she deserves."

"But you won't give it her," muttered Fred to himself.

"And pray what does this intrusion mean?" blustered the Captain, recovering somewhat from his surprise.

Frederick Dean did not condescend to answer; but, catching him by the collar as he was going up to Harris, gave him a twist and spun him into a chair.

"Stop for me!" he cried; but his friend was already at the foot of the stairs.

"Which way did that lady go?" cried Harris, hastily.

"I did not see her out, sir," said Turner Pike, with a salute.

"Now, what good can you do by rushing about?" began Fred.

"Don't drive me mad, Fred," cried Harris, "but either come with me quietly, or leave me to my fate."

The Lieutenant shrugged his shoulders, and pulled out a cigar, which he proceeded to light, as his companion hailed a hansom; but some time elapsed before they could secure one, and then they were rattling through the streets towards the one intitled Great Bare, but they were long upon the way, in consequence of divers vexatious stoppages, chief among which was a tuft of straw hanging across a street beside a lantern to denote that the road was up.

"Stop, cabman!" cried Harris, springing out; "I may want you. Has Mrs. Levigne been here?" he said to the girl who answered the bell.

"Yes, sir, she came in and went up to your room, and then into the laboratory, I think; but she went out again directly."

Harris darted upstairs, followed by Fred, seized the matches from the mantelpiece, and lit the gas. The first thing that caught his eye was a sheet of note-paper lying open upon the desk, and, on seizing it, he read, hastily scrawled in pencil, the words, "Forgive me! Good-bye! H. L."

He then glanced hastily round the room, as if seeking for something he expected to find there. The next instant his practised eye had detected a vacancy in a row of bottles, and, going close up, he read the labels on either side, to convince himself that it was the one he imagined that had gone.

To hurry into his bed-room was the next step, where he saw that the small album lying upon the

table had been opened, and the leaves torn where two cartes of Mrs. Levigne had been.

"How long has Mrs. Levigne left the house?" he cried to a servant upon leaving the room.

"The cab she was in drove off, sir, as you came up," said the girl.

"Here, quick, Fred!" he cried excitedly; "we have been wasting time here."

Frederick Dean shrugged his shoulders.

"I must find her, or I shall feel that I have the poor thing's blood upon my head. Oh, my God!" he cried, starting, as if struck by some sharp instrument that had pierced a vital place.

"What is it?" cried Fred.

"Here, come on," he shouted, seizing the Lieutenant by the arm, and hurrying him into the cab. "Onslow-crescent," he cried to the man.

"Why, she wouldn't go there," cried Fred; "she was as jealous as thunder of poor Mary."

"I know—I know," almost shrieked Harris, thrusting up the trap of the hansom. "Gallop—gallop—a sovereign if you make haste!"

The man needed no further exhortation, and the well-bred screw he was driving tore along at a furious rate whenever there was a little clear space.

"One might as well talk to a madman as to you," growled Fred; "but what in the name of all that's wild are you going to frighten those poor girls for? They've suffered enough as it is, and it's not likely the woman would go there."

"I don't know—I don't know," cried Harris; "but I have a presentiment of something wrong, and this fellow is crawling."

"Let him be, man!" exclaimed Fred, grasping his arm. "We shall be upset if there's any more of it. There!" he cried, as they swung round a corner, "that was as near over as ever I was in my life. Why can't you let things take their course, now you are out of a mess?"

But Frederick Dean said no more; for he saw that his wisest plan was to try and protect his friend from importunity or extortion, such as in his present excited state he would be most likely to encounter.

"I'll keep tight to him," he muttered, as Harris sprang out at Onslow-crescent, and tore at the bell.

"The Misses Dean in?" he cried.

"Gone to tea at Mrs. Dean's, at Lowndes-square, sir."

"Where?" cried Harris.

"All right," said Fred—"Aunty's. Come along; I know."

"Has a lady been here—tall, dark, and dressed in black?"

"Yes, sir," said the girl; "she came up to the door as the young ladies got into the fly, and they asked her in, and she drove off with them."

"Here, jump in," cried Fred, warming to the chase. "We shall run her to earth now, if you must see her again."

And the next minute they were tearing through the streets as furiously as ever.

Lowndes-square was soon reached, and a message sent up to the Misses Dean that their cousin wished to see them, when they came down into the library, where the visitors had been ushered.

Mary Dean started and flushed upon seeing Harris, but came forward with her hand held out; while so great was the reaction upon seeing her safe after the terrible suspicions that had crossed his mind, that he staggered back against the bookshelves.

"You are ill!" she said, anxiously. "Let me ring for some wine."

"No—no!" he said; "better now. You brought some one here with you?"

Mary Dean could not help the change in her voice, as she replied, "Yes!"

"And is she here now?" gasped Harris.

"No; we set her down at Sloane-street, according to her wish," said Mary.

"Mary, Mary," whispered Harris, "don't judge me hastily, but tell me all—all—for it is a matter of life and death. Why did she come to you?"

"I can scarcely tell you," said Mary Dean, coldly, in spite of herself. "It would be almost a mystery, but for the poor thing's agitation. She came, she said, to ask my pardon."

"For what?" cried Harris, eagerly.

"Nay, do not ask me," replied Mary. "Can you not see how painful this interview is? Mrs. Levigne was wild and incoherent, and I tried hard to restrain her, but I could not."

"For God's sake, Mary, help me over this. You drive me to speak before others. You know I was engaged to her, and despair has driven the poor creature out of her mind. I am a free man once more; but I do not wish to purchase my freedom at the cost of that poor thing's life."

"I can tell you no more, Harris," cried Mary, in an agitated voice. "She came begging me to forgive her for standing—for any annoyance she had ever caused me; and knelt in the brougham at my feet, passionately embracing me, and asking me to say a loving word to her. But, oh, Harris," she cried, bursting into tears, "what have you done?"

"Come, come, stop there!" exclaimed Fred. "He has done nothing but act as a gentleman. Don't accuse him wrongfully."

"Did she say where she was going?" cried Harris, not heeding the last words.

"Yes," sobbed Mary, "she said 'Home;' but so bitterly, that it made me shudder."

The next moment Harris was at the door, beckoning to Fred, who joined him, and the two hurried into the street to seek a fresh cab.

"Where now?" said Fred, as they leaped into another hansom.

"Police station!" replied Harris, shortly.

And thither they were driven, to alight at the well-lit door, and hold communication with a cleanly-smug inspector, in an office, where he made a few entries in a book, asking questions the whole time—not forgetting addresses and descriptions, including that of Captain Verrey, whom he seemed to know.

"Had she money with her?" said the inspector.

"A good sum, I should say," replied Frederick Dean, and detailed his reasons for thinking so—namely, the offer he had heard her make that night; but the inspector shook his head.

"You need not go into that," said Harris hoarsely.

"Just as you like, sir," said the inspector; "only remember that it is safe with us, and half-confidences will only defeat your own ends. It's no use to set the hounds of the law to work in leashes: we must have perfect freedom of action."

"Tell him all, Fred," whispered Harris.

And he walked to the door; while the Lieutenant placed the whole particulars in the light that should reflect them into the inspector's understanding.

"And what had we better do now?" said Harris, as he obeyed the beckoning finger of the inspector.

"Go quietly home, sir, and wait till you hear from us again."

"What! and not aid in the search?" said Harris.

"Don't see what good you can do, sir, till we send for you. Here you are now in Great Scotland-yard, and not long after you're back home the description of the party wanted will be all over this little town of ours called London; besides which, as you of course wish, there will be a detective specially on the track. We shall have some news for you, I dare say, by breakfast-time to-morrow morning."

Frederick Dean linked his arm in that of Harris, led him out of the station to the cab, and gave the man instructions where to drive.

"Can I do you any more good to-night, Harry?" he said, as they stood together upon the pavement in front of the house in Great Bare-street.

"No," replied Harris, moodily. "Good night."

"Good night," said Fred.

And they parted, the dragoon to re-enter the cab, and Harris to ring for admission.

The door was opened, after some three summonses, by the sleepy maid.

No, no one had been since he had left; but there was a letter.

Where was it?

In the drawing-room; and the next minute Harris Morley was reading a short, disjointed epistle from Hester Levigne, written that night, and dropped, by perhaps her hand, in the letter-box; while its passionate, loving words told of the agony of the woman who had written it. It told that she would be no more when it was read; that for his sake she had plotted and planned, loving him ever with the strongest affection; that she had heard the promise he had given to his mother respecting Blanche; while to remove that obstacle to her hopes she had sinned even to the crime of murder, for she had poisoned. He was to try and forgive her, even while a curse was hovering upon his lips; for she had been mad—tortured by her love, and by the villain who had wronged her in her early womanhood, and made her his slave ever since.

"But what more need I say?" continued the letter.

"You heard all to-night, and saw me in my true colours; but, while judging me, believe this—the words I utter with my dying lips, my last thoughts before quitting this world—through all, no matter what my actions, I have loved you, Harris, passionately—loved you with all a woman's faith and fervour; and now, for my crime, what more can I do but offer my own life as expiation here, and go to the great unknown world for judgment? Pity me, even while you condemn; and know this, that my last prayer shall be for you, and for your happiness

with her at whose knees I have knelt to-night. I have injured you deeply, and in my death I offer you the best reparation."

"What have I done?" gasped Harris; "why did I hide it?" he cried aloud. "Why did I hush it up in my own mind, when my conscience said, Make it known? Exposure, publicity!—fool, madman!—what were they in comparison with this? for have I not sent this woman to her death through my concealment?"

And then in an agony he paced up and down the room, half frantic with the recollection of some horror that shook his frame, and turned his cheek of a sickly, ashy hue.

CHAPTER XXIV.—"WHERE THE LAMPS QUIVER."

HOW still the house sounded in those small hours of the morning, as Harris Morley paced up and down the room, mad with excitement! He had read the letter again and again by the faint light of the chamber candlestick; and now to his distempered imagination it seemed that his mother and sister were upbraiding him for his inaction.

Half-a-dozen times over he had seized his hat to go out, but the thought that a message might come from the police-station stayed him, though the inactivity was maddening.

"Poor Hester! poor Hester!" he kept on muttering.

Over and over again did he regret that he had let Fred go; for he was utterly unnerved. And at last, unable to bear the torture any longer, he rushed out of the house and wandered anywhere.

Every policeman he met he questioned, but the men had no news, though all seemed to know of the search; and after an hour's walking he stood in the entrance to Great Scotland-yard. But here his courage failed, and a dread came over him lest he should hear of some terrible news; for now, always filling his imagination, he could see a pallid figure writhing with torture as it clasped a tiny bottle tightly within cramped fingers; and ever as he turned away came the dread vision, till he groaned, and ran to leave it behind him, dashing along the Strand till breathless, when he turned to gaze along the dark vista dotted with gas-lights.

Again a policeman—but no news; and on he strode, turning down towards Waterloo Bridge, with a dread upon him lest the vision might be a lying fabrication of his distempered brain, and that he should now be chilled with horror by gazing down from one of the recesses upon a pale face floating with the tide.

He paid the halfpenny, the copper turn-table clicked, and he wondered whether the unhappy creatures who had passed through it for the last time ever noticed its peculiar sound. Then he was upon the bridge, gazing anxiously from side to side at the recesses, and once crossing the road to look at what seemed to be a bundle curled up in a corner. But it was not what he sought; and wild and bewildered with the wind, which rushed between the balustrades, he pressed on, slipping at times upon the worn granite paving.

Another policeman—but no news.

"Hadn't he better go home and wait?"

"Well, yes, perhaps he had; and he would go along by the river streets, and into the Westminster-road, and so back over the new bridge."

"Good night."

"Good morning, sir."

And the warder of the streets shook his head as he gazed after the wild figure which hurried away.

"I wouldn't be him for fourpence," said the policeman, settling his head in his stock, and going swinging along his beat, stopping now and then to punch at a door, or try a shutter-bar in the dark parts of the road between the gas-lamps.

Out at last into the Westminster-road, and then on towards the bridge, whose lights shone in front; while towering above, far on high, shone the great clock-face, like a huge moon looking down upon the sleeping city.

On still, with the road completely deserted, not even a policeman in sight; and at last Harris Morley stood shuddering upon the great bridge, looking over the low balustrade at the black rushing river, and thinking how easily a desperate woman might cast herself off.

Harris Morley heard nothing, saw nothing external, as he leaned over the balustrade, not even the figure that passed; but the wind blew her garments against him as she hurried by, and starting, he saw beneath the lamps the tall commanding figure of her he sought.

To leap forward and seize her was the work of an instant, when, seeing whose arms clasped her as she turned upon him, Hester Levigne gave a faint cry, and struggled to free herself.

"Hester, Hester!" he cried, wildly, "you are mad! Stop! Must I be brutal?"

And he had to put forth his whole strength to hold her.

"Let me go—be merciful!" she gasped, and struggled on violently. "Why do you hold me?" she cried, fiercely—"for the gallows?"

"Hush!" he cried, clasping her tightly in his arms. "Can you listen?"

"No—yes!" she panted, struggling on.

"Your letter was untrue. You deceive yourself." Hester Levigne laughed a bitter, mocking laugh.

"No," she gasped; "there was no deceit."

"Woman, are you mad?" raged Harris.

For she struggled on with a strength he could not withstand.

"Yes," she cried—"mad, and a murderess!"

"It is false!" he said. "Blanche died by poison which dripped through—do you hear?—dripped through from my laboratory—My God, we are lost!"

The struggle had been fearful during the last few moments, and the words of Harris Morley came like sobs from his breast; for, tall and vigorous, the woman had wrestled with him till she thought herself freed, when with a bound she had cleared the low protection by the pavement, and hung partly suspended over the side, with Harris clinging to her. But the struggle was over, for his feet glided from beneath him as he vainly tried to support the heavy burden; while now, in the last agony, the hands that had repelled clung to his coat, and with a wild cry of horror he felt himself drawn over, and

then rushing through the air down, down, into what seemed an interminable depth.

Then came the plunge into the cold black tide, the strangling gush of the stream in his nostrils, scalding him, as it were; while the water bubbled and thundered in his ears, and swept him along; and now, like darkness over his soul, came the bitter agony of the thought that he must drown.

Then for Harris Morley all was one blank, as if of a deep sleep that had fallen upon him; for he had not heard the loud alarm shouts given from the bridge by the detective and his men, who had tracked Hester Levigne for above an hour, and only came up in time to see the termination of the struggle. It was not for Harris Morley to hear the cry responded to from the pier below, where a boat was moored, and men stood eagerly watching for what the tide should have driven towards them upon its murky breast.

But there were busy hands there and strong, and that early dawn two bodies were drawn from the water.

CHAPTER XXV.—“OUT OF TUNE AND HARSH.”

WHAT had been his sin in her eyes that her heart said “Reject him—cast him off for ever”? Easy words to repeat; but for years Mary Dean had thought of Harris as her future husband; dwelt with tenderness upon his straightforward, manly letters to her father; heard of his deep researches in chemistry, and unknown to her sister had obtained a work upon the science, and read and studied the unfeminine pursuit; and now that she had returned, expecting his love and sympathy—expecting to be received with open arms—she found him betrothed to another.

She gave no groan; there was no outward display of sorrow; but her tender spirit was wrung—bitterly wrung; and in the despair and loneliness of her heart she lay weeping bitterly on the night of her arrival in London. Her father dead; Blanche Morley, who was to have been to her as a sister, dead; and Harris, whom she had looked to as her future husband, as the protector who should be her shield from life's storms, faithless.

But she had risen calm and tranquil the next morning, ready to bear her burden, and met Harris Morley when he called as she would have encountered any other friend. The wish to blame someone for her sorrow was gone, and Maude claimed much of her attention, for she was very delicate.

She had learnt from her cousin's clumsy hints the position of Harris with respect to Mrs. Levigne—heard his wishes upon the subject, and quietly declined to interfere; shrinking with maiden modesty from the task that he at last in his ignorance would have placed upon her. She had wept long and bitterly after her interview with Fred, for it had been to her as the opening and probing of a wound that she was trying to heal. Her cousin's rude hands were totally unfitted for the task he had attempted; and seeing his blundering, and the effects of his half-uttered wishes, he had gone disheartened away, to make fresh efforts on his own behalf, with the success we have seen. And now once more he had sought the sisters to tell them of how Harris's eyes

had been opened through his instrumentality, and of the result of the night's quest.

“But not—”

Mary Dean could not frame the words, as pale and horror-stricken she had listened to her cousin's recital; for he thought it better she should have it from his lips than see it in the papers.

“No,” he said; “they were both alive when taken out of the river; but it was doubtful whether the woman could recover. I have just left Harris's bedside. He is in a raging fever. You might, perhaps, have prevented this, Mary.”

“Oh, Fred, don't reproach me!” she cried, catching his hands; “you don't understand these things. How could I act otherwise than I have? But are you sure that all was at an end between them?”

“Quite; and in his last acts he was only moved by pity, I suppose, and a desire to prevent any disastrous results. I thought it Quixotic and foolish of him; for it was evident that he was the tool of a designing woman; but he was more clear-sighted than I was; and he saved her life, it seems. But there, girls, I must go back to him. I can understand that he wants help now, and some one to sit with him; but I'm not clever, and all this bother and worry muddles me. Here's everything been going on as it should not go—nothing right; and it don't seem as if matters would ever come so.”

Frederick Dean was right, and Harris was in a raging fever—one that threatened to extinguish the flame of his life, that had heretofore burned so strongly. At times it required all the efforts of those who sat with him to keep him to his bed. But that time passed, and the paroxysms became less violent, though his mind seemed gone, and he raved incessantly of the struggle on the bridge, and the various incidents of the past.

Frederick Dean and his cousins took up their abode in Great Bare-street for the time being. Mary willingly consenting to Fred's request, for the formalities of English society were not well-known by her, and she had no scruples against going to the house on such a mission of mercy.

And so it came about that hour after hour there sat a bright-haired figure by Harris Morley's bedside, listening to his ravings, cooling his forehead, and moistening his lips; never wearied, never flagging in her attention; and almost dragged away by Fred at times, who would take her place, and watch till nature overcame him, and he slept; when Mary would steal in, and resume her task till he woke to find her by the bedside.

Day after day, and Harris Morley lying in a stupor that seemed almost death; then raving and moaning, piteously asking for help against the temptation upon him, for strength to fight and do his duty; joining his hands at times to Mary Dean, and appealing to her. And it was strange; but his ravings never took this bent save when she was by his side—joining his hands, and telling of the battle that had gone on in his heart; how through all he had loved Mary, and felt sure he was fighting against heart and conscience in keeping blindly to the promises he had given, first to his mother, and then to Mrs. Levigne. And then he would beg the

weeping girl to intercede for him, telling her she was his guardian, his good spirit; giving her passionate messages, and moaning again when she only answered with tears.

"Ask her to forgive me, for I was mad," he whispered earnestly, as he glared upon her with his fevered eyes, hissing the words from between his cracked lips.

"I do, darling—I do forgive you," she sobbed, leaning her pale cheek against his burning forehead.

"What!" he cried, "you will not go—you will not tell her? There, leave me! let me rest! let me sleep!"

And he would wander off into some wild imagination, wherein was mingled chemistry and his tests; and this train of reasoning, or perhaps unreasoning, brought him to the death of Blanche, though the listener could not follow him.

"There," he would say, "did I not tell you she was innocent? She thought it; but I knew. She fancied it some mistake—medicine; but I saw—I proved it. Enough of the crystals to have slain a score filtered through the ceiling—drops of water holding it in solution. There, mind—don't you hear it?—drip, drip, drip, that's how it fell; that's how it's falling. Keep nostrils and mouth closed, or it will gain entrance. Mind—mind! Look at the ceiling! there's another drop falling, and another forming, to fall in half an hour by the clock. Don't let it fall on me, for I want to live and be sorry—live and repent!"

Then he would struggle feebly for a while, and end by lying upon his back with his eyes fixed upon a spot in the ceiling, and keeping on counting one, two, three, four, up to sixty, like the seconds of a clock, as if never tired.

It was no wonder that in his wild fits he thought her a being of another world as she sat by his bedside, the sun perhaps shining upon her glorious hair till a halo was shed around her; and his hands pressed to his forehead, he would gaze for long upon her with his lips moving, and his eyes glittering above his sunken hollow cheeks. The crisp black curls were gone, but his massive beard was untouched; and as he lay sometimes for hours gazing up at the ceiling, but for the light motion of the black hair around his lips, it could have been easily imagined that the struggle was over.

At times it all seemed more than Mary Dean could bear; for she grew unnerved with his passionate appeals—appeals that she responded to as passionately, but only at last to make him angry and thrust her away; for he would imagine her to be Mrs. Levigne, and addressing her as Hester, upbraid her for tormenting him with her love, and standing in his way—reviling her bitterly, and telling her that he would never marry, for he felt his heart to be another's.

"But you are dead!" he would cry, excitedly; "I saw you glide over the bridge, and heard the water leaping up to receive you, and you will torture me no more."

The doctor came, and the doctor went. More advice was sought, and calm stern men in black, with loud-ticking watches, stood round Harris Morley's

bed, looked grave, compared notes, and held consultations afterwards in the dining-room, tending to the same result—that the danger was past, but change and nature must effect the rest.

More days passing, and gliding into weeks; and now a tall, thin man, whose clothes hung about him in folds, was creeping slowly about the house, always to turn from Maude Dean when he encountered her, and shuddering at the sight of her black curls. But Mary was his constant companion, and upon her arm he leaned as he made his way restlessly from room to room, and along passage and staircase. Speaking but seldom, and never to anyone else, he refused all food but from her hand, and only rested in one place—the sofa in the drawing-room—where he lay back watching the ornament in the ceiling, and counting from one up to sixty, slowly and deliberately, with the regular beat of a clock, and then saying loudly—

"Drip!"

And this he would keep on for hours.

As soon as the doctor gave permission, Fred took a house at Hastings, a little back from the sea, and there they all spent some months, Harris reviving fast beneath the effects of the brisk, health-giving sea air—always quiet and amiable, smiling pleasantly when spoken to, and becoming at length so far accustomed to the society of Maude that he confined his dislike to sitting with his back to her, and never responding in any way if she spoke to him. Now they would spend hours upon the sea; now ramble beneath the large rocks that stretch away from the old town; then have a trip inland; and Maude recovered her health and spirits, while her sister seemed fast subsiding into a settled melancholy.

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.

And Manchester and Liverpool.

The Chemist:

A SEQUEL TO JACK LAW'S LOG.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XXVI.—"WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"



ANY a glance was directed at the beautiful, sad-faced girl leading about the tall, dark gentleman, said to be insane, and who never rested unless she was by his side; who seemed

mechanically to perform the simple duties that courtesy demands, aiding his companion when they encountered some more than usually rugged spot, supporting her where the rocks were slippery, and on more than one occasion lifting her in his arms and carrying her across some inlet of the sea. But there was no conversation, save when at last the full vigour of his frame had returned, and the crisp black locks were again curling round his high white forehead. He would ask Mary one question, after perhaps leading her away to where they could be alone, seating her upon some huge rock, and then placing himself at her feet with his hand in hers; when, after looking out to sea for some time, he would gaze in her face with a strange, absent air, shaking his head at times, as if to rid himself of something which obscured his faculties; and then, in a vacant way, he would ask her—

"What does it mean?"

"What does it mean?" How could she respond to the question otherwise than by her tears, which flowed freely, so that at times they fell upon his hands. But he started not, only sat gazing wonderingly into her face—perhaps to repeat his question, perhaps to sit silently until she rose and led him home.

At times he would ask the question calmly and quietly; at others in so pitiful a voice that it seemed to cut Mary Dean's heart as she wept on. There were no passionate words now, no messages, no prayers for forgiveness; only the oft-repeated question and the counting up to sixty, and the word "Drip!" as he gazed fixedly upon the ceiling.

But at length there came another change; for he would connect the two together, counting sixty,

and then asking earnestly what it meant. Fred exerted himself as far as he could, spending nearly all his time at Hastings; for his regiment was quartered within easy reach. And he found that after a little perseverance he could get Harris for long walks, or out for a row, and even to play some outdoor game, providing always that Mary Dean was there—else he grew restless and troubled, turning backwards and forwards like a dog that had lost its master, and only becoming easy at last when she was near him.

The doctors all gave the same opinion—that time would work the change. But as months passed by the cousins became less hopeful, and Mary Dean seemed settling down fast into a calm, staid life—one that should be spent in ameliorating the sorrows of others; while from walking long upon the beach, and being necessarily thrown much together, it came to pass from talking long and earnestly of poor Blanche and Fred's sorrow for the afflicted girl, that a warmer feeling than pity sprang up in the breast of Maude Dean. And more than once, after witnessing the partings of Fred and her sister, Mary Dean sighed, and the tears filled her eyes; but they did not seem tears of sorrow, even when they overflowed; for with a smile upon her lip she kissed the dark-haired girl fondly, and caressed her as she hid her burning cheeks upon her breast.

Major Dean's daughters were not without a protector when their cousin was away; for at any time might have been seen stalking along the sands, climbing over the rocks, or complacently following the sisters about like an animated ramrod, Turner Pike, pensioner, and late sergeant of Highlanders; his well-brushed blue surtout coat buttoned tightly across his thrown-out chest, his war medals and clasps carefully displayed, a stick in his hand, his hat a little on one side—just the cock military—and his hair and whiskers more skull-cap and strappy than ever. He would have thought no more of cutting down any cockney visitor who had made himself obtrusive to the young ladies than he would of flashing his sword upon a Sikh in the days of long ago. He was proud, was Turner, of his charge; for it brought up within him the recollections of the stormy scenes he had passed through with the parents; and the old man would settle his chin in his stock—a very uncomfortable one, by the way, whereof the horsehair stiffening always seemed to be at war with the bristles of his beard, and rasping therewith—and then flourishing his cane, stride along, looking as fierce as such an old dog of war could look.

It was Fred's doing that he had come down; for the Lieutenant had been somewhat troubled about getting a suitable attendant, when he encountered the old man in the street, and stopped talking with him for some time, listening to his complaints, and telling him of the state of Captain Morley's son.

"By the way," said Fred, brightening up, and giving the old man the wherewithal to procure snuff and tobacco—"by the way, Pike, I wish I had you down there to act as body-guard."

"And I wish you had, sir," said Pike, ruefully; "for since the Captain went, after I gave him a bit

of my mind, there's no peace at home. Though, sir, it was the smash as broke that principally."

"The smash?" said Fred.

"Well, yes, sir; you see, Mrs. Pike got into a bad habit of going out and leaving all the money locked up, and forgetting to put the key on the proper hook in the cupboard. Well, you see, what could I do, when I wanted a trifle for some little purpose, say for a wee pinch of snuff, or sech, but try and riddle out a groat or so from the money-box on the shelf? I was busy over it one day when Mrs. Pike came back all of a sudden, and so startled me that I let the little box fall, and smashed it, and there was all the bits of money rolling about the room, and me down on my knees picking them up; while she—that's Mrs. Pike, sir—was wringing her hands, and weeping and greeting over it all, and saying I was a thief and a robber, and kept back part of the price like Ananias. And it ain't nice, you see, your honour, for a man's wife to be calling him such names as that when she draws all his pension herself, and keeps him as low as ever a poor creature could be kept. No, sir," said Pike, dolefully; "the Captain went away twenty pounds in our debt; and she—Mrs. Pike, sir—screws dreadful ever since. There's no peace at home, sir."

"Go away for a bit," said Fred, smiling.

"Think so, sir?"

"Most decidedly," said Fred.

"Mightn't let me go back again, sir," said Pike.

"Nonsense, man! Absence makes the heart grow fonder, you know."

The words of Frederick Dean fell upon soil well prepared, and created a revolution in the tea-chest mansion; for Turner Pike egged himself on with a glass or two of mountain dew, bought with Fred Dean's money, and told himself it would be an act of duty towards the children of his old captain and lieutenant; so Mrs. Turner Pike had to succumb, with an expenditure of many tears, and prepared for her lord a couple of new flannel shirts, for fear the sea air should be too keen, and interfere with the regular payment of the Sergeant's pension. These she packed for him, along with his second best suit, in a big blue bundle-handkerchief, gave him eighteenpence, promised to see that his substitute attended to the Sunday duty at church, and then, after a few sighs, almost as bulky as groans, she freed him from her encircling arms, and let him depart.

So it came to pass that Turner Pike was installed as attendant and body-guard to the Major's daughters, and "that daft laddie, Captain Brandon Morley's son."

CHAPTER XXVII.—A CHANGE.

THE autumn was drawing to a close, but Hastings was very full, for the season was unusually fine. Lodgings were hardly to be obtained; and visitors went on to St. Leonards, came back, searched the old town, and even thought themselves very fortunate to get hold of the most minute accommodation at the highest of prices. The sands were covered with visitors in the soft warm evenings, when the waves came washing musically in, and breaking in a long line of phosphorescent light upon

the beach. Wherever a rock presented a seat there was a sitter; while the stars looked down with softened radiance upon the calm sea. Along the esplanade, windows would be open, and as the thin muslin curtains were softly wafted to and fro, glimpses were afforded of well-lit rooms, from which came the hum of conversation or the ringing chords of a piano; while in balconies here and there the bright end of a cigar could be seen glowing and paling, and in most cases the smoker seemed to have a companion.

Frederick Dean was down, and, loving as he did his cigar, he had strolled out to have it before tea; Mary pleading indisposition, and Maude staying with her for company. But a word from Mary had made Harris rise—tall, athletic, and healthy-looking once more, though there was the wild look in his eye that told its own sad tale.

No words—no converse—but at a word from Mary he suffered Fred to lead him from the room, took the offered cigar, and walked with him arm-in-arm calmly, and making way where necessary; in everything the gentleman, but lacking mind.

And yet Fred never tired of him, but went on chatting pleasantly by his side, while the sound of the young man's voice seemed to have a certain soothing effect upon him, which caused him to tighten his hold a little upon Fred's arm, and at times look wonderingly in his face.

"Ah, Harry, old boy," said Fred, as they stood at last where the waves were washing in amidst the sharp remains of the old harbour—"ah, Harry, old boy, I wish you'd come all right again. What can we do for you? I don't know much of Shakspeare, but you always will make me think of 'sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.' You were a clever old chap, you know, once, but times are altered. What are we to do for you?"

Harris responded to this exhortation by the same old look, and then walked slowly on by Fred's side up from the sands and on to the beach, where the stones were loose, and then on to the esplanade, where there were plenty of promenaders.

"Glorious night for a stroll," said Fred. "Why, you're out—light up again, old boy." And he stopped to ignite a fuzee, from which Harris mechanically took a fresh light for his cigar, and then walked on. "Let's go down through the old town—the walk will do you good, old fellow."

And so he went chatting along, as was his custom, making poor blank-minded Harris the receptacle of all his thoughts, telling him of how he could not help admiring Maude, and pointing out the various points of similarity in appearance between Maude and Blanche; how Maude's hair would be precisely the same if she allowed it to flow down her back like Blanche used; and how they both had the same low musical words and gentle ways; and then he would sigh, while Harris answered never a word.

"Come along, old fellow; don't lag," said Fred, at last. "Down here, and then we'll go back along the beach, and home again."

All at once Fred stopped and stared about him; for it seemed that from just above his head he had heard a voice that he knew. The next moment he saw that it was from the open bay-window of the

lodging-house they were passing, and he was about to step back a little to where he could look up, when his attention was taken by the movement of his companion.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—LOST.

AS Frederick Dean turned and looked at Harris Morley, the same voice came again, low and full-toned, from the open window above them. The night was close and dark, and where they stood they were in the shade; while the gas from an adjacent lamp shone full upon the window, where sat two figures, but too far back for their features to be discerned.

"Yes; when I am in my grave," came in low, measured tones.

And the voice sent a shudder through the not very sensitive frame of Fred Dean, for he recognized it in an instant, while its effect on Harris was electric. He started, clasped his hands to his head, as if to stay it from splitting; threw himself on his knees, and stayed there an instant, then, leaping up, he turned fiercely round and gave vent to a wild cry that had in it nothing human; when, overturning two people who stood in his way, he went bounding between a couple of the fishing boats drawn up on the shore, and dashed furiously down towards the sea.

For an instant Fred was petrified, and stood staring at the people thronging round; and then he darted off into the darkness in the direction taken the instant before by Harris.

From the direction in which he ran, it seemed as if he meant to rush out into the sea; and Fred's brow grew damp with horror as he thought of his fate, with the tide fast running down.

"What a fool to bring him out! but who would ever have thought he would act in that mad way?" he muttered, as he bounded over the sand, trying to pierce the darkness before him, and seeing nothing but the long line of light upon the shore.

The beach was now forsaken, and he met no one of whom he could make inquiry. Right in front there was the faint-flashing gleam of the breaking waves, but the interval seemed thick and heavy; while right and left lay the lights of the houses for a short distance, and then, off east, all darkness—a darkness made more intense by the towering cliffs.

"If I get my arm hooked into yours once more, old fellow, the next bolt you make will be with me on your back; and I don't think you're up to fifteen stone for any distance. Confound the rocks!" he exclaimed, as he tripped over a mussel-crusted fragment, and went sprawling on the wet sand.

"Harry, Harry!" he shouted, after running a little way by the line of breakers; but the sighing of the rising wind was the only response, save when the waves gave a heavier wash than usual, and he started and shuddered.

"No. Come, I'm not going to believe that," he said, hurrying along. "But what, in the name of all that's unlucky, has brought that woman down here? She made him half mad, and now she's come down to finish it, confound her! How he did dart off, though! There could have been no mistake, when it acted on the poor fellow like that."

He was now standing under the steep cliff whereon yet tower the old castle ruins, and kept on peering along into the darkness, listening, too, but still hearing nothing but the moaning of the wind, which was fast rising.

"Hullo!" exclaimed a gruff voice, as he nearly ran into some one's arms.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Fred.

"Aint the sands big enough for you?" growled the man, passing on.

"Did you meet a gentleman running?" said Fred.

"No, I didn't," growled the man. "I met a cockney, though, as had better have stopped indoors."

Fred felt annoyed for a moment, but said directly after—

"I beg your pardon, but I'm following some one. Did you meet an invalid gentleman running just now?"

"Let's see," said the man, coming up closer to Fred. "Ah, I know you now, sir. You're the gent as goes out with the big dark one as—you know—in Tom Scott's boat. What's he gone off?"

Fred explained all that he thought necessary, and the man shook his head.

"Aint come by here, I think, sir. Hev you been home?"

"No, not yet," said Fred. "I thought he ran this way."

"Gone home, sir, safe," said the man. "And that's jest the same place as I'm going to, after I've had a pipe in here at the Ship, where you'll find me, if so be you wants me."

"Well, I begin to think you are right," said Fred, walking up the beach with the man, and then hurrying back to the house, where he found Turner Pike placing the urn upon the table, and Mary Dean just rising to prepare the tea.

She looked anxiously at Fred as he entered; but he would not meet the glance, and with an affectation of carelessness strode out upon the staircase to wait for the coming of Turner Pike.

The old man was out the next moment, and drew himself stiffly up to the salute.

"Here, slip on your hat, and come with me," said Fred, in a whisper. "He's slipped away from me, and gone tearing over the sands like a—"

Fred did not finish his sentence, for a pale-faced figure in white had glided out of the drawing-room, and stood clasping the old man's arm.

"What is it, Fred?" she whispered, in a calm, collected voice. "What is wrong that you have left Harris?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing!" said Fred; "only I missed him on the beach, and thought that he had come back before me. Pike may as well go with me to hunt him up."

"Yes, yes; by all means," she said, quietly.

And the two men descended to the passage; but before they reached the door, Mary Dean had glided down after them with her hat on, and her busy fingers fastening the brooch which confined her shawl.

"Oh, come!" cried Fred, "don't you think of going; the wind's getting up, and there will be rain before long."

"Leave the laddie to us, Miss Mary," said the old man, "and we'll find him."

"Don't stop me, Fred," said Mary, piteously.

And there was such a power of supplication in her eyes, that her cousin was silenced, and she placed her hand upon his arm ready to accompany them.



"But ye'll tell Miss Maude first?" said the old man, growing excited, and, in consequence, very Scottish in his dialect.

"Yes, yes," cried Mary; "but you won't deceive me, Fred—you will wait?"

"That he will, miss, I'll warrant," said the old man, shaking his head fiercely.

And Mary glided up the stairs and into the drawing-room, but she was back again directly, and they hurried out into the dark night.

During the short interval of Mary's absence Fred had debated within himself whether it would be better to tell his cousin the cause of Harris's sudden emotion; and then, thinking of her quiet, well-tutored mind, he decided that it would be best, and hurriedly told all when she came down.

"She here!" said Mary, involuntarily, and she clasped painfully her cousin's arm.

"The laddie would not have gone back to that house after you had gone, would he?" said Pike, inquiringly.

"Why, you confounded old fool!" burst out Fred, in a rage, for a plaintive sigh had escaped from Mary's breast; "don't I tell you that he dashed away as if Pandemonium was at his heels?"

"Hoot, then! I didn't say he had gone back there," said the old man, apologetically. "Don't we want to find him? and isn't it as well to think a bit, and not go running one's head into places where he isn't likely to be?"

"Let us make haste, Fred," whispered Mary; "and don't you think we ought to have help?"

"Yes, by all means," said Fred. "Here, Pike, you know the Ship; there's a bluff old fellow there, in a striped jersey and dark trousers; ask him if he

didn't speak to a gentleman on the beach to-night, and say I should be glad if he'll come. We'll follow."

"Double," said the old man, facing round, throwing his body forward, and setting off at a military trot in the required direction; but he halted directly on hearing Fred's cry—

"We'll be down on the beach."

Then he started again, and Fred and his companion hurried along, the wind now coming from the south-west in heavy, soft puffs, that sent Mary Dean's light drapery streaming away.

"Let us go by the house," she said, calmly.

And after a moment's hesitation Fred led her up to the small lodging-house, where the windows were now closed and the blinds drawn down.

But as they stood looking up, Fred felt his arm pressed, for a profile they well knew appeared for an instant on the illuminated blind; but ere it disappeared they had time to note that the old, proud, erect carriage was gone, and that in the *pose* there was an air of dejection and languor that spoke of long illness.

"Which way did he go?" whispered Mary, her voice sounding hoarse and strange.

"Along here," said Fred; "mind the rope and that capstan. Now then, between these two boats. That's as far as I could follow him, for it was nearly as dark then as it is now. Mind your hat," he cried, hastily, for a puff of wind came laden with a few drops of rain, and made Mary's hair fly streaming over her shoulders.

They had now crossed over the loose stones to the sand, and carefully making their way along in the darkness, pressed on towards where the little public-house stood.

"That old chap will know all the ins and outs, and help us wonderfully," said Fred, feeling called upon to say a few words to divert the current of his companion's thoughts. "I say, though, what a blessing that we weren't up above there on the cliffs! he'd have gone over like— Here, what a fool I am, my dear, talking like that!" for Mary Dean had shuddered audibly. "We weren't on the cliffs, but on the shore; so come along, and we shall find him sitting here on one of the big pieces of stone under the rocks somewhere; so don't be downhearted. We ought rather to be pleased that there are nerves in his mind that will thrill so strongly when touched. It looks hopeful, you know."

"What an ass I am!" he muttered directly afterwards; "but, there, I never did have any fine sympathies; but to go on blundering like that, and driving the poor little bird almost into hysterics! That's three times I've heard the great sobs sticking in her poor little throat. I'm *tacet* for the rest of the night; for, speaking musically, it seems that I am bound to strike the wrong notes."

"Who are those?" whispered Mary, as three figures seemed to rise up as it were out of the darkness; but they declared themselves the next moment.

"Not found him then, sir?" said the gruff-voiced man. "Thought I'd bring my mate with me—Tom Scott, you know. The young lady there knows him;

but what a pity to bring her out, sir! Blow a gale from the sou'-west afore long, and rain heavens hard."

"Well, how do you propose working?" said Fred. "Just as you like, sir; only p'raps being young and active you'd best lend a hand, and let the old gentleman here, as seems a bit stiff in his jynts, take care of the young lady."

"Yes, go—go, Fred; do all you can," whispered Mary, earnestly.

And loosing herself from his arm, she clung to the old man, who stiffened himself up, and gave his cane a fierce flourish.

"Well, come on then," said the gruff-voiced man. "We'll take the way along the coast first—my mate taking the sands, the old gent here with the lady the road, and we two doing all we can among the rocks, though it's my belief as we shall do no good till daylight."

"Oh! pray search," cried Mary on hearing his words.

"Search? Yes, miss, we'll search; only don't expect too much, for it's black as Ejup."

It seemed from the very outset a vain task to seek on such a night; but hour after hour they kept on, threading the masses of sandstone—stones torn from the beetling cliffs—climbing up to the various holes and caves weathered out, peering into crannies that were of darkness the blackest, but finding nothing. Several times over they thought they could discern the figure of Harris seated upon some fallen mass at the foot of a cliff, or dimly seen upon some ledge against the gray buttresses of rocks; but disappointment was always the result. The echoes only responded to their shouts when the wind did not bear them away. Every now and then the rain came driving down in squalls, drenching the party to the skin; but still they sought on, only sending the man called Scott back to the house twice to see if there were any tidings of the lost one.

It was a weary task; for as they sought farther from the town, the foot of the long range of beetling cliff was more and more strewn with huge fragments, any one of which would have afforded shelter and concealment to the fugitive. But they toiled on, hour after hour, the weakest present showing the fewest symptoms of fatigue; and though his stiff old joints gave him many a rheumatic twinge, old Turner Pike stumbled along, and checked every sigh and groan that struggled for exit.

"Think it likely he could have got as far as this, sir?" said he of the gruff voice, stopping to wipe the rain and perspiration from his face.

"Impossible to say," said Fred, in an undertone, for Mary Dean's white dress could be seen a short distance off.

The rain squalls kept now coming faster and faster, while the intervals between the gusts of wind grew shorter, till there was a regular gale blowing—so furiously at times that they could not face it, and were glad to stand under the lee of a piece of rock to converse. The darkness was not now so intense, and when the clouds broke occasionally, and a few stars peeped out, Mary was able to survey the desolate spot where they stood.

Seen by daylight, with the warm sunshine tinting

the gray weathered cliffs, and dancing from the waves, it could have presented beauties to the eye of the lover of nature; but now in the faint weird light, with shadows ever and again deepening, the wind roaring, and the thundering in of the now fast-coming tide, whose foam-crests could be seen whitening the beach, it was a dismal sight, and the huge cliffs seemed to frown upon them, and hang over as if ready to fall and crush them every instant.

"Let the men go back if they wish, Fred," whispered Mary, "and we will search together. I can't give it up, indeed."

"No, I don't want you to," said Fred, kindly; and then addressing the two men—"Come up to me in the morning some time, and I will settle with you; you know where I lodge, I suppose? Don't stop any longer."

"All right, sir," said the gruff-voiced man; "and p'raps, if it arn't a liberty, what are you and the young lady a-going to do?"

"Keep on searching," said Fred.

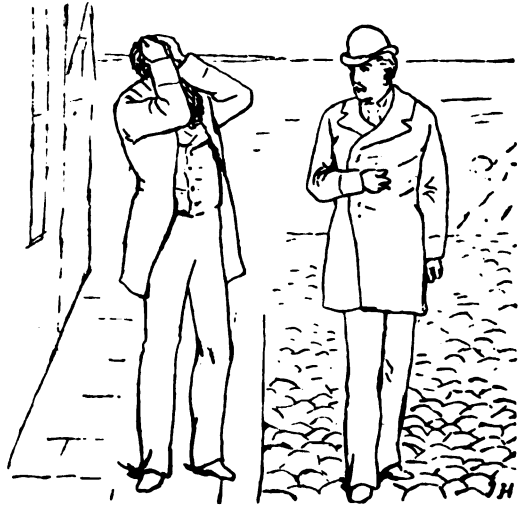
"Hear that, Tom Scott?" said the gruff man.

The man called Scott grunted loudly, and seemed to be masticating something in a very energetic manner.

"And what are you a-going to do, Tom Scott, eh?"

"Why, I'm a-going to keep on sarching; that's what I'm a-going to do, Sam Biggs."

"Well, blame me, begging the young lady's pardon, if that aint what our old landlord up at the Ship calls a reg'lar goinsidus. You know, that's just what I'm a-going to do. So here goes. Don't you go thinking, sir, as we wanted to come poodle, and slink off with our tails between our legs, because I said 'Think he came as far as here;' all I wanted



to know was, whether it mightn't be better to hunt back a bit, seeing as we maybe have passed him in the dark. Been 'nation dark to-night, you know."

The man named Scott grunted acquiescence; and then slowly and laboriously the search began once

more, and was kept up till long after morning had broken, when, weary and dispirited, they returned to the town; and after changing his wet garments, Fred went to the police-station to give information, and ask that the quest might be continued.

CHAPTER XXIX.—SEEKING.

DURING the next three days a vigorous search was instituted and carried on for miles along the coast, and even inland, but without result; and Mary Dean sat pale and anxious, but uncomplaining, in her room, waiting for every scrap of news that Fred brought from time to time. He had made inquiry at the railway stations, thinking it probable that the lost one might have taken a ticket for London; but learned from Mary on his return that he never carried money. Investigation by means of the police had shown them that two ladies, one of whom answered to the description of Mrs. Levigne, had stayed for three days only at the house in the old town, and that one of them was evidently very ill. Fred had then set off for London, thinking it possible that Harris had made his way there; and to his great surprise learned that he had made his appearance there, dusty and travel-stained, that same morning, looking wild and haggard. He had then hurried upstairs to his laboratory, without speaking, stopped there some time, descended to Blanche's bedroom, and then the servants had heard the front door close loudly. That was all they could tell.

Fred had then made his way to Mrs. Pike's, in hope that he might have called there; but that estimable lady had not seen him. A visit to Onslow-crescent, and another to Lowndes-square, were both without result; and he returned at last to Hastings, with a face that told its own tale. And yet there was gladness in the house that night, for the impression was removed of Harris having met some horrible death—by drowning, or falling from the cliff; and Mary Dean's face lost the pained expression, to give place to one of calm patience and resignation—a look that softened down the few traces left of her old girlish vivacity—a look that never after left her sweet face.

And Time stayed not, though they were all anxious, any more than he does to assuage the troubles of others—he lends the softening influence of years to some, but speeds on inexorably. The services of a detective, well paid though he was, were useless, as also the quest of a private inquiry office. Fred went here and there to inspect bodies that had been found, and went off upon these missions secretly; but he was never shocked by gazing on the countenance of his old friend. From the time that the door was heard to close in Great Bare-street, he seemed to have passed out of this life; and at last, in a calm, resigned spirit, the cousins said they would leave it in greater hands than their own, and waited patiently for the revelation of the mystery.

Mary would not believe him dead, neither would Maude; and though a shiver would pass through the frame of the former occasionally, when she thought of Harris in connection with Mrs. Levigne, it was but a passing emotion, for private inquiries had set that doubt at rest, by tracing Mrs. Levigne to Bog-

nor, where she seemed to be passing calmly and slowly from this life, and ending her days an incurable invalid.

Mary Dean could not crush down the hope that now flickered, now blazed up strongly in her breast—the hope that he would yet return, strong and well, to her love; and though she battled with herself, she knew that he had but to ask to have; that she lived but for him, weak though she told herself her passion was. She could feel now and believe that upon that stormy night the emotion that had swept through him was one of horror, and he had fled to be away from her rival; and as this thought came, the flame leaped up higher and higher in her bosom, and a smile rested upon her pale face.

Fred's word was law with the sisters, and he had insisted upon their return to town, that his cousins should make their home in Great Bare-street, where it seemed most probable that Harris would return some day; but every care was taken that information should be sent up immediately should he happen to revisit Hastings. Mary combated the arrangement at first, but soon yielded, and took a pleasure in seeing that his home was ready for him should he return at any time. Fred, too, spent all his spare hours there; and from the smiles which gave him welcome it was plain to see that Maude had taken upon herself the task of trying to solace him for the loss which he had sustained.

The winter passed, and no tidings. Spring came, and budded into summer, and still no tidings; and the autumn came, and found them reinstalled in their old Hastings lodgings, with Mary growing daily paler and more quiet.

At times Fred regretted that he had chosen Hastings, or rather consented to their return; but he had almost been compelled to yield, so great was Mary's desire that they should spend the autumn there in preference to Torquay, as had been first proposed.

And, as before, stalking behind them at a respectful distance, was old Turner Pike, "feeling like a major, sir," as he stumped about, frowning majestically upon any who seemed to make too much use of their eyes.

Maude's pleasure seemed almost the only thing which brought a smile to her sister's face, though she would make old Pike come and sit at her feet, and tell her the story over and over of the Indian campaign, and the bravery of Captain Morley and her father. But the old man could not sit to tell his stories. Before he had got far, he would be upon his legs, with his wrinkled old cheek flushed, his eye brightening, and his arm flourishing in the air; so that, as a rule, Mary Dean chose some quiet, sequestered nook beneath the great cliff before she called upon the old man for one of his narratives.

"Haven't been so happy for years, sir," the old man would say in confidence to Fred; "and I wouldn't take these monthly payments, sir, if it warn't for my lady Pike at home. Just before the month's up, sir, down comes a fierce letter saying that she's lonely and dull, and suffering in her mind on account of my speretual welfare; and she must have me back at once, or she will be obliged to fetch me. So, sir, I get a money-order, and write

her a verra nice letter, telling her that I'm weel enough in sperret, and only suffer in body, for which I find the sea air wonderful. Then I tell her I've sent a trifle for her to do what she thinks best with, and beg that she will remember to see about my pension when pay-day comes; though if it troubles her I'll come up myself. And then, sir, I never hear any more for nigh upon a month; and I'm leading the happiest of lives here. But do you think he'll ever come home, sir?"

Fred shook his head doubtfully.

"Can't say, I'm sure. It's a most mysterious thing. I've had his photograph sent nearly all over England."

"Old as I am, sir, I could almost find it in my heart to take a clean shirt and a pair of socks, and set out to find him. D'ye think it would do any good, sir?"

Fred shook his head again, and the conversation ceased.

It was as nearly as could be a year since Harris Morley had disappeared, that Fred was sitting one night in the drawing-room talking in a low tone to Maude; whilst Mary sat at the piano, softly playing little minor chords and passages, as if thinking music, and whispering her woes to the instrument, so that it gave them expression aloud in tones that seemed to float mournfully through the room and out upon the still night air. The sea was again phosphorescent, and the low murmur of the waves was mingled with the gentle sighing breeze and the sound of passing footsteps, with now and then conversation or a merry laugh.

Suddenly Mary ceased playing, and sat there with her head bent down over the keys. The others were too much occupied to notice her, as more than once a little bright tear fell with a soft drip upon the ivory before her. It was just one of those warm oppressive nights in late autumn, when the spirits seem yearning for the unseen, and a feeling of despondency takes possession of the heart. Her thoughts were in the past, and she was thinking of the bright future she had pictured for herself so short a time since—of a happy home at whose fire-side her father would have loved to pass his declining days; and now in these few short months what had taken place!

Her reverie was interrupted by the old Sergeant standing in the doorway, and fiercely gesticulating with his thumb for Fred to come out. But Mary started from her seat at the same moment, her face paling more than ordinary as she caught the old man's hand.

"What is it, Pike?" she said, eagerly, as the old man delivered himself of a series of nods and winks for Fred's special benefit. "What is it? pray tell me!" she cried, in agitated tones. "I'm sure there is something."

"Jist nothing at all, lassie—Miss Mary, I mean; so don't be greeting about what don't concern you. It's the Lieutenant—I beg your pardon, sir, I forgot the promotion—the Captain is wanted by a man downstairs."

"Don't trifle with me, Fred," cried Mary, turning to her cousin, who replied by drawing her hand through his arm, and leading her with him down-

stairs, while the Sergeant looked the image of perplexity.

In the passage stood the same rough man in the striped jersey shirt, who had been their companion on the night of the unsuccessful search, and who now took off his tarpaulin with some difficulty; for it had been wedged down hard in its place, and left a mark as though his head had been turned in a lathe, and a level piece taken off all round to allow of the fitting of the hard covering.

"Come orn," he said, as soon as his eyes lighted on Fred.

And he accompanied his words with a scoop of his fist in the air, ending by pointing over his left shoulder with his thumb.

"Come where?" cried Fred, excitedly.

"We've seen him at last," said he of the gruff voice, waving his hat triumphantly.

"Oh! when—where?" cried Mary, running forward, and catching the old fisherman's rough palm in hers.

"Why, love and bless your pretty face, miss, ten minutes ago, out in front of a lodging-house in the old town. Tom Scott's a-watching of him, so as he don't give us the slip again, and I run up here as hard as I could bust."

"Stop for me, Fred!" cried Mary.

And in less than a minute she was clinging to Fred's arm, and they were hurrying along in the direction taken a year ago, and gone over so many times since.

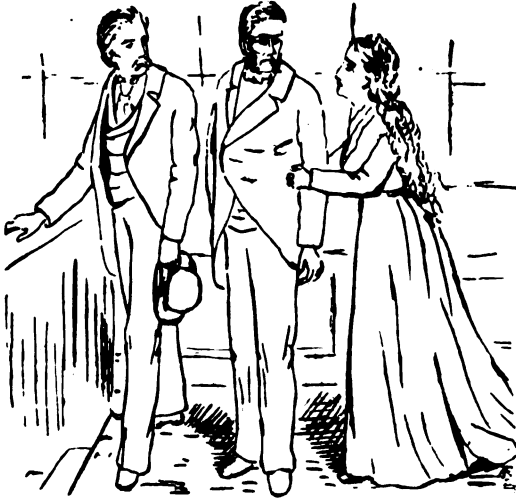
"Beat—beat—beat!" the young man could feel the girl's wild heart bounding with excitement, as they followed the rough figure, till they were near the lodging house where Harris was startled by Mrs. Levigne's voice.

"Now, then," said the sailor; "he was a-walking about just there. I'd swear to him; and if you walk gently up, you'll take him in front. Tom Scott's a-watching t'other side, and I'll slip round here, and be at the bottom of them boats, where you say he dodged through last time; so as if he takes another run, I'm down upon him there, and if I gets one nip at him, big as he is, he may get away, but he'll take me along wi' him, and I shall know where he goes."

With beating hearts Fred and Mary Dean saw the old man disappear round some boats drawn up out of reach of the tide; and then they advanced cautiously, Fred loosening himself from Mary's grasp, so as to be ready to seize the fugitive should opportunity present itself, but, at all events, so as to be able to go in chase. Another minute, and he could see a roughly-clad figure indistinctly on the other side of the intervening gas-lamp, apparently eagerly watching the window of the house where he stood, and every now and then changing his position as if to get a better view.

As Fred advanced, he could hear that the window was open, and many voices were engaged in conversation; but the movements of the figure before him riveted his attention as he stole closer and closer, till he was almost within reach; when again through the night air rang the wild, inhuman cry of fear and horror, and before Fred could grasp him, Harris Morley had darted down between two of the half-dozen boats drawn high up on the beach.

Moved by a desire to lessen the distance, Fred rushed down between those nearest to him; when in the darkness there was a collision, a volley of oaths, and Fred and another man were rolling on the ground.



"Tom Scott, hillo!" roared a voice at his ear, as, half stunned, Fred tried to struggle to his feet.

"Not this time, my lad!" growled the same gruff voice again.

And the next moment he felt himself seized by the legs, and two men carried him out to the lamp.

"He's knocked the on'y two front teeth out as I had, Tom; but, blame him, we've got him! Where's the young orficer?"

"I'm here," said Fred, as they set him down, staring.

And then the gruff-voiced one wiped his bleeding mouth with the back of his fist, brought it down with a sounding smack into the palm of the other, and then growled out—

"Well, this caps all! Which way did he go?"

But Fred's attention was taken up by Mary Dean, who was just staggering as he ran to her and caught her in his arms.

"No, no, no!" she cried, struggling the next moment to free herself; "it is past now. I am better, Fred. Run, run, men! that way, that way!"

And pressing her hand to her side, she hurried forward in the direction she indicated.

"Ah!" grunted the gentleman bearing the sobriquet of Tom, "it is run, run; but it's my opinion that he's made himself a precious rare specimen by this time."

Hours of fruitless search again, till far into the night: along the shore—moonlit this time—amongst the caves in the cliffs, round the huge boulders, in the rifts and crannies, up and down, hour after hour—till, worn out and nearly heart-broken, Mary Dean, who had held out till hope seemed past, sank sobbing into her cousin's arms; when the rough men contrived a hammock of a piece of old sail from a boat-house, and tenderly bore the brave girl home

to where Maude had been watching anxiously for their return, and Turner Pike, like the squire in *Marmion*, had been fretfully snuffing the excitement from where he kept watch and ward over the fair girl in his charge, but all the while impatiently longing to hurry off.

Long dreary hours of search up and down the shore, and wearily amidst the fallen masses of rock—search without result; while all the time, seated upon a jutting portion of the cliff, in a position that threatened death each moment—upon the jutting piece of rock to which he had lowered himself after scaling the castle cliff—was Harris Morley, his elbows upon his knees, his chin upon his hands, gazing far out to sea with wild and dilated eyes, his forehead contracted, his hair rough, and his beard tangled, while his clothes were such as may be seen any day upon some luckless trampler of our country roads. Silent for a while, and gazing ever with a puzzled expression far out to sea, where there was a long path of light stretching towards the moon; and then he would look round him anxiously, and say in a whisper, as if dreading lest he should be heard—

"What does it all mean?"

CHAPTER XXX.—FOUND.

IT was late when Fred met Maude at the breakfast table that morning, for the day was advancing fast when they had all retired—Maude sitting by her sister's couch until her sobs had grown less frequent, and she had slept.

"I did not disturb poor Mary," whispered Maude; "I thought it better not."

"Quite right," said Fred. "No news, I suppose?" But before Maude could answer, Turner Pike made his appearance.



"They've seen him again, sir, and they want you," he cried.

Maude turned pale, and looked anxiously at her cousin.

"Shall I tell Mary?" she said, hurriedly.

"No, no," exclaimed Fred; "but go up to her

room, and stay with her to prevent her coming. There may be a painful scene, which I should like to spare her if possible."

Maude ran up the stairs, and Fred hastily descended; but before he reached the door, where the



gruff-voiced, toothless fisherman was standing, there was a cry from upstairs, and Fred bounded up again, to find his cousin tearful and agitated, while she told him that Mary had disappeared.

"Her hat and mantle are gone," exclaimed the startled girl.

"Well, what of that?" cried Fred, peevishly, though the news made him slightly uneasy. "Gone for a stroll, that's all."

But if that was all, he bounded down from landing to landing, and was soon hurrying along beside the fisherman, and closely followed by the old Sergeant; while he learned, as they went towards the spot where Harris had been seen amongst the cliffs, that two men were watching him, and only waiting his coming to take steps for the fugitive's capture.

"I s'pose you won't be above treating a poor fellow to a couple of noo tusks if we do ketch him this time, sir?"

"Twenty, if you like," said Fred, laughing; "but how far are we from the spot?"

"Good mile, sir—just where it's very lonely—but if we step out we shall soon do it."

It was a bright, brisk morning, with the water just crested and silvery, while, with every stitch of canvas spread, vessel after vessel glided easily along. The sun shone warmly, and plenty of visitors were out upon the sands; but as Fred walked farther on, the part he came to was quite deserted.

"Much farther?" cried Fred, impatiently, as they still strode on.

For the fisherman's mile seemed very elastic, and to keep on stretching as they hurried along.

"Bout 'nother half mile," said the man, "and close up under the cliff."

"You say he was sitting on a block of stone, looking out to sea?" said Fred.

"Yes, that's how he was when I come away; but if he moves, them two will folly him, and it won't be so easy to slip off in daylight, will it, sir? But do you think he'll show fight? Some of them chaps are very dangerous, I've heerd. There's that Tom Scott, when he's been on the drink a bit, turns awful, and it takes two to hold him, and—"

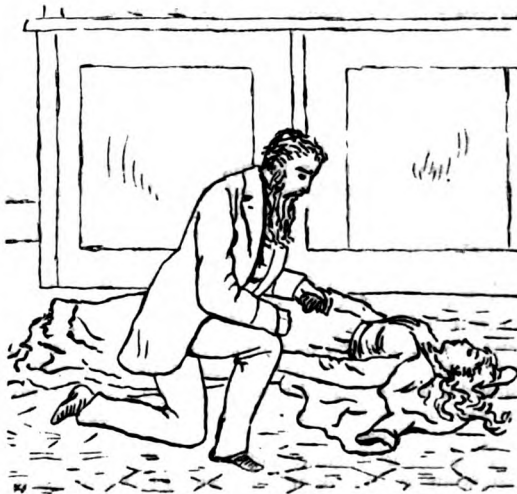
"Pray come on!" exclaimed Fred, impatiently.

"Better mind how you go, sir, 'mongst these blocks and pieces. Gentleman was a-telling me t'other day as the sea must have washed right up here one time. Hold hard, sir; stop! Look there!"

The man might well exclaim, though he had no occasion to stay "stop," for Fred had halted on the instant. About fifty yards in front, where the blocks of stone lay thickest, and hitherto concealed by a huge, fallen mass, sat Mary Dean; while, watching from an eminence behind her, were the two men, to whom she appeared to be holding up a hand by way of caution. But what took Fred's attention most was the figure sitting at her feet, just in the same old attitude, holding her little hand, and gazing up into her eyes with his own wild glaring orbs, but apparently calm and perfectly sane. Once the fugitive started, for he had caught sight of the newcomers; but the hand laid upon his shoulder quieted him in an instant, and he sank back in his old attitude, gazing up into Mary Dean's face.

"Well," said the old fisherman in a gruff whisper, "seems as if I may go; for the young miss there can lead him with a thread, while if I step in with my mates there'll be a row."

Fred's only answer was an impatient wave of the hand, and then he slowly made his way nearer and nearer. Then he stopped, in obedience to a motion from Mary Dean, for Harris had started fiercely



again. But once more a gentle pressure of the hand and a few whispered words, and he was calm.

Fred waited then for a few minutes before he stirred, and then again—twice—three times the same motions were gone through before he was close up to Harris's side; when he coolly seated

himself, and then felt that he must seize the poor fellow and call for assistance. But he reasoned with himself that it would be better not to use violence if it could be avoided; so he restrained the desire, though his nerves tingled and the blood danced in his veins, as, after the long suspense, he now had the sought-for one within his reach, and yet dared not try to hold him.

But now Harris seemed fully to realize his position; and, gathering himself together, he gazed fiercely at Fred, whose breath came thick and short, and his hands trembled; while Mary's face grew most piteous in its expression as she tried to calm the long-lost one.

It seemed that the next instant would witness either the flight of Harris Morley once more, or else a desperate struggle; when a sudden thought struck Fred, and, drawing out his case, he coolly lit a cigar, began smoking, and then held case and match-box to Harris with a quiet "Try one, old fellow."

The *ruse* had its effect, for Harris quietly took the case, helped himself to a cigar, and, following Fred's example, began smoking, while the sigh of relief the donor gave sounded more like a groan.

Harris sat and smoked for a few minutes, and then threw away the cigar and leaped to his feet; when Mary immediately took his arm, and suffered him to lead her toward a rift which led to the downs above, while slowly following at a short distance came Fred and the three men.

"What a fool I was not to seize him!" muttered Fred; but he consoled himself by thinking that perhaps his cousin would yet be able to calm his friend and lead him home. "Nice-looking object, too!" he muttered.

The strange couple were now out of sight, having turned a corner; and Fred took advantage of their absence to beckon to the men to close up, and whisper that they should be guided entirely by his acts, while the moment they saw him seize the wanderer, they should come to his assistance.

A few more minutes' climbing and he was up on the down which ran right to the edge of the cliff, which here formed a precipice of a hundred feet high, whose perpendicular side rested amidst a very chaos of rough blocks of stone, ready to present their jagged surfaces to the unfortunate who should fall from the unprotected summit.

And now it was that with a smothered cry of horror Fred gazed upon the group before him; for Harris, holding tightly by Mary Dean's hand, was just seating himself on the extreme verge of the cliff, while Fred fancied that he could detect the faint shudder which passed through the poor girl's frame as she obeyed his gestures, and seated herself beside the fugitive.

Fred felt in despair, and stood with the palms of his hands growing damp; but anger took possession of him the next moment, and he turned sharply upon the old fisherman, who had just growled in his ear—"Well, you've done it now!"

"Hold your tongue, fool!" cried Fred, "and be ready to act. Get your men round the other side, and try and crawl slowly up. We must seize him now, somehow."

"Of course," said the man—"seize him now, when he's safe to go over the cliff, and take that young lady with him; and let him go when you had him in your fingers! I desay it's all right, though, for I never had any eddication."

But again Fred's forward movements were checked by his cousin, who was now seen to be talking earnestly to Harris, while the latter passed his hands over his forehead, pushed off the hair, and then gazed round in a bewildered way, as if trying to make out something that was confusing him. Now he would start to his feet and gaze seawards; then look down upon the rock-strewn shore beneath them as if about to spring off; and again and again Fred would have dashed to his cousin's aid, but for her peremptory motions which kept him back. She seemed to have no fear; though, clasping her hand as he was so tightly, had Harris slipped, or, as he seemed about to do, bounded over the edge of the cliff, the fate of Mary Dean would have been sealed.

They were agonizing moments, and Fred's brow was wet with great drops of perspiration. He was as ready to face danger as most men; but to stand there in such fearful suspense, unable to act in any way, and compelled to be a witness of the scene, was more than he could bear. He said afterwards, again and again, with the solemnity of a man whose truth could not be doubted, that had he had rifle or pistol in his hand, he should have unhesitatingly sent a bullet through the skull of Harris Morley, and felt that he was performing but an act of duty to save his cousin's life.

Twice he advanced, prompted by the old fisherman, and in disobedience of Mary's imperative gestures; and each time, with his eyes fixed upon him, and his hand still clutching tightly that of the poor girl, Harris Morley backed slowly along the edge of the cliff, and the last time so near that Fred stopped, and his hands were upon his eyes to shut out the horrible sight, while Mary Dean heard the groan that burst from his breast.

But after a few minutes, when he looked again, Harris was seated at Mary's feet, listening to her words, and apparently trying to understand their import as he gazed earnestly in her face.

And so passed away a couple of hours—hours of unutterable suspense; while Fred felt that if it lasted much longer he could not bear it, strong man as he was; and at last he crept cautiously to the edge of the cliff, some twenty yards away from where Mary sat, and began slowly to steal nearer and nearer to them. All at once he started, and stopped petrified, for a loud shriek came from below; and in the instants which followed, he saw Maude, with her hands outstretched, gazing wildly up; Harris upon his feet, with Mary in his arms; and then all seemed to swim before him as he made two bounds forward along the brink, stumbled over a piece of white stone placed to show how near was the edge, and then he fell heavily, and lay half stunned, till he was helped to his feet by the old fisherman, who pointed to Harris slowly making his way to the opening which led to the shore, and carrying Mary Dean in his arms as tenderly as a mother would an infant.

Perhaps it was from being half stunned with his fall, or it might have been from the reaction of

seeing his cousin released from such frightful danger; at all events, Frederick Dean, a man the most cool and matter-of-fact as a rule, reeled, and would have fallen over the cliff but for the stout arm which grasped his, as a hideous, deathly faintness came over him, and for a few minutes all was to him a blank.

But he soon recovered, and wiping the cold sweat from his face, he hastened down to the beach, where, with her arm resting upon that of Harris, Mary Dean was slowly walking towards the town; and twice the wild figure stooped to tenderly lift his companion over little inlets of the sea, and pick out for her the clearest parts where the beach was rock-strewn.

The others followed at a distance; for it seemed evident that all that was now required was to let the hand of gentleness lead the poor wanderer home.

Once a fear crossed Fred's breast, as he followed with Maude trembling upon his arm—a fear lest Mary should take the way which led by the lodging-house; but she had sufficient foresight to avoid it, and kept along the sands until opposite the street which led to their apartments, when she turned short round, and, heedless of the hundreds of wondering eyes fixed upon them, led the way home, where, upon entering the drawing-room, Fred found her lying upon the carpet perfectly insensible, with Harris kneeling wonderingly by her side, and as they entered he looked up in their faces to ask as of old—

“What does it mean?”

CHAPTER XXXI.—WHAT IT MEANT.

DAYS and weeks of quiet, with Harris calm and restored to his old apathetic condition, always the attendant of Mary in her walks by the beach, and free from every token of excitement.

The time sped on, and though little improvement was visible, yet there was a change—one which Mary marked as he followed her about like a dog: he grew more earnest, and day by day more importunate with his question—

“What does it mean?”

One day he startled her by leaping up suddenly and staring about him with a wild air; but a word from her calmed him, and he sat down again upon a stone by her side, where they often strolled to listen to the murmuring wash of the sea amongst the rocks—a sound which seemed to soothe Mary's feelings, while it would sometimes bring a smile to his handsome but vacant face.

Another change in him—

“Something's coming,” he exclaimed to Mary, one day. “When is it coming? and what does it mean?” he said, again and again.

And as her heart leaped to hear the words, she whispered in his ear—

“It means hope, darling, and it is coming from God.”

And then, as his great wild eyes stared wonderingly at her, she burst into tears, and the hot blood mantled in her pale cheeks.

One day—what a day that day is, and what adventures have happened, crimes been committed,

and strange sights been seen upon it!—the party of four were down upon the shore. It was one of those bright, warm, spring days, that seem like portions of the bright fringe of summer's train, cheering our sight for a while as token of the coming gladness. Down upon a rock by the sea Mary was seated, with Harris, thoughtful and calm, by her side, while Fred and Maude had wandered lovingly away. The place where they were was deserted, though one of the grandest pieces of scenery along that part of the coast; for the visitors, as a rule, seemed to prefer the esplanades in front of the houses to nature in her wildness.

Harris had given no further tokens of amendment; but Mary had nursed in her breast hopes since the last change, and augured much from a strange thoughtfulness which appeared at times to come over him—such a fit as now seemed to be upon him as he sat looking in her face.

All at once she grew alarmed: she knew not why, but the fear was there, as if notes of danger or coming change had been sounded by her heart; though, still calm and motionless, Harris sat as he had sat scores of times at her feet. She tried to speak, but her voice only obeyed in whispers; and she now felt that there was a change in his eyes, a look that she had never seen in them before—a look that seemed to disturb her whole being; and, had she possessed the power, she would have turned and fled. The look was not vacant, nor wild; it was not a look that she felt that she ought to shrink from, for it stirred in her thoughts of tenderness, of the happiness she had once pictured in her young and ardent imagination, and now the tears rose to her eyes as she sat and trembled.

Suddenly Harris sprang to his feet and began to pace the shore; then he returned and knelt before her, to ask her wildly—

“Something's coming; what does it mean? Tell me—quick, while I can think—tell me again.”

“A change for the better, I hope,” cried Mary, trembling violently, as he knelt and grasped both her hands.

“No—no—no! Not that! not that! Say it again—*it*—*IT*—*IT*—as you said before! What is coming? what does it mean?”

“Hope from God!” she murmured.

He looked at her, and all around, then sighed.

“No, no, no!” he moaned. “Not that! not that! What does it mean? what is coming? What does it mean?” and he held his head in his hands and rocked himself to and fro, moaning piteously.

“Tell me again—tell me again,” he whispered, “before the darkness comes. Quick, quick! for it comes down, closing me in; and light cannot get in for me to think. But you told me once—once. Did you not tell me before the darkness?”

And he then looked wildly round once more, then gazed earnestly in her face, as if to read what his poor blank mind sought to single out.

“Tell me,” he moaned again piteously, for Mary was gasping with emotion and trembling so that she could not speak—“tell me what does it mean? what is it coming?”

“Harris, darling, my own,” sobbed Mary, throwing her arms round his neck and clinging wildly to

him; "it means hope and happiness, and it is from—"

She said no more, but fell back, as if crushed, and cowered against the rock; for, with a wild yell that seemed to make her very blood curdle, he had sprung



from her, and stood with his clenched fists pressed to his throbbing temples, while the veins of his forehead were swollen like cordage knotted beneath his transparent skin—a wild, inhuman, piercing yell that would have made the stoutest shudder, and think that it was the unclean spirit exorcised and fleeing away for ever.

A minute of wild agony—of terrible suspense—such as produced marks upon Mary Dean's brow that were never effaced; and then she crouched nearer to the rock, clinging to it with a cry of anguish, as she saw him throw his arms up wildly towards the sky, and stand there with closed eyes as if turned to stone.

"What have I done?" she moaned in the faintest whisper.

But he heard it, and leaped towards her.

"Given me life—love—everything!" he cried, with a wild hysterical laugh.

And then he was upon his knees at her feet, sobbing like a child, the tears coursing over her little hands, which he held pressed to his throbbing brows—weeping copiously tears that seemed to bear with them the thick films that had so long oppressed his reason; while at last, forgetful of everything but the present, it was as though a shower of gold had fallen upon his head, as Mary Dean drooped over him till her brow rested upon the head in her lap, and she too wept—forgetful of everything but the present, as she sat there, beneath that large mass of grey rock, the wind sighing by, the waters washing almost to her feet in musical plashing cadence. But they were alone—no prying eyes came near; for that part of the shore was completely deserted.

What need of words—of more than the sigh that broke from one or the other breast? It was enough for Mary Dean to know that Harris was restored;

and the sense that something of it was due to her lent a certain feeling of ecstasy to the moments so swiftly passing.

The afternoon wore on, and the silence was one that neither dared to break; for Mary trembled lest this should only be a transient gleam—a bright ray of reason that should fade, as was now fading the warm sunshine of that bright day. The thought forced a long-drawn sigh from her breast, and, as it came tearing forth, she felt the hands that held her own leave them to clasp her tightly for an instant; while a pair of warm lips rested upon her own, and then again his face was buried in her hands, and he knelt there motionless.

How silent is a footfall upon the myriad-grained sand as it comes nearer and nearer to the one who muses on the sea-shore—perhaps to produce a start, as started Mary Dean, when a slight exclamation of surprise caused her to raise her drooping head, shake back her long golden hair, and gaze, red-eyed and bewildered, at her sister and cousin. But her hand was gently withdrawn, and raised to command silence; for she knew that words were welling from the heart of the kneeling man, and those words were words of thanksgiving and prayer.

But Harris soon became aware of there being others present, and slowly rising, he drew the arm of Mary tightly through his own, and then, with the other, drew Maude to him, and kissed her forehead.

"God bless you, Fred!" he said; "I haven't a hand at liberty."

Fred was too much astonished and overcome to speak; but he muttered something in a choking voice, and then, taking Maude, he stood looking in his old friend's face.

Was it the same? Had the change taken place so suddenly, and was he once more the Harris Morley of old? The change had taken place, most truly; but it was not the Harris Morley of old; for a great alteration of character was there, though shown but little then.

Mary Dean walked back as one in a dream; she could hardly believe it true that the blank, vacant shadow of a man she had led from the town that day was the same as the earnest being who spoke but little as they walked along the shore; but the words were the deep calm words of reason.

"Let us go away at once," he said to Fred as they entered the house.

"Where to—Great Bare-street?" said Fred.

"No, not yet," replied Harris with a faint shudder.

And the next day they were at Matlock.

CHAPTER XXXII.—MONTHS AFTER.

"WELL, gentlemen, I really don't know whether I'm sorry or whether I'm not, begging your pardon, ma'am, and yours too, Miss Maude; and I shall be glad to see you like your sister when the Captain takes it in his head."

"There! 'tisn't my fault," said Fred bluntly; "I don't mean to take the blame."

Maude blushed deeply, and gave Fred a look that made him repent of what he had said.

"There, you mustn't mind me, Miss Maude, an old man, old enough to be your grandfather. But

about this news: I don't know whether I was sorry or whether I wasn't; and when I went up and had all proper done, I don't know then whether I felt as I should have felt, and I did try hard to behave decent. The place looked so dull and gloomy; and the ball-cock had stuck in the kitchen cistern, and the floor was inches deep in water; while in the little room the images on the chimney-piece seemed to look reproachful at me; as for the missionary-box, it stood all patched and mended with bits of tin at the corners; and when I took it up it was quite light, for there was only an old pocket-piece and a crooked farthing inside, which rattled in a real melancholy way.

"I suppose she went off quite quiet and happy, and never once asked them to send for me; and I suppose I did neglect her a good deal of late. But there, sir, and ma'am, it's been the only real happy bit of my life, going about with you, and now at the sea-side, and now for a bit at Paris in France; and altogether, I'm sure I often forgot all about Mrs. Pike, from never being in want of a pipe of tobacco or a pinch of snuff. But she was a good woman, rest her soul! and for 'auld lang syne' I've put on a bit of decent mourning, and tried very hard to look as I should do. But they might have sent me word, and let me see her when she was ill. A very good soul she was, and she's left a nice bit of saved-up money to the chapel, and I've got the lease of the house and the furniture and my pension; so that Want won't never be able to say, 'How d'ye do, Turner Pike?' to me; though, if you'll let me stop on here, sir, perhaps I could make myself a bit useful amongst the little bottles and gallipots up a-top of the house there, in the big attic. I've been busy there all the morning; but it will be days before they are all straight, let alone the dust."

These last words of the old Sergeant made Harris Morley leap to his feet and hurry up to his laboratory, where he was not long alone, for the old man came puffing up, in dread lest he had given offence by meddling, however good his intentions. But Harris found that everything had been carefully replaced after being moved; while before long his face lit up as he heard a sweet voice whisper at the door, "May I come in?" when the old man ran to open it, and, discreet old soldier that he was, Turner Pike faced to the right-about, and saw nothing of a caressing hand amidst the golden curls that showered around the young wife's earnest face.

But, the sanctity of the laboratory once invaded, the thin end of the wedge once inserted, more entered, widening the breach; and soon merry voices were heard, for Fred led in Maude, bright-eyed and flush-cheeked with the exertion of ascending so many stairs.

"Turner Pike, laddie, ye're not wanted," said the old man to himself as he put down his duster, and laid a finger upon his nose. "'Tention! by yer right; march;" and he made his way downstairs to the pantry he had dubbed his quarters.

The old Sergeant was right—he was not wanted upstairs in the laboratory, for the merry voices had soon ceased; and now in this first meeting in that room, since they had returned to Great Bare-street,

there were recollections of the past that brought sorrow to every heart. Frederick Dean could picture a slight worn figure, earnest-eyed, drawn-featured, and with long black hair floating down her back; while Harris trembled as he sat in the window-seat, and put his hands, as if for protection, in those of his young wife, who read his thoughts as he recalled the stern, handsome woman who had often sat with him in that same room; and again and again he contrasted the mad passion with the tender womanly love that now so warmly flooded his soul.

He shuddered, too, as his eye fell for a moment on a portion of the floor where a new piece of board had been let in, and he thought of the fallen bottle, the escaped crystals, and the solution slowly trickling through and soaking in between floor and ceiling. Then, too, there was the filter; and he involuntarily rose and crossed the room to try whether the little tap was safely turned.

Harris Morley shuddered as he returned to his seat in the window; and then a glance at the bright face which looked so earnestly in his seemed to give him confidence, and with it reassuring smiles which were brightly reflected.

At the other window a conversation had sprung up, low and earnest, wherein could have been detected—had there been disengaged ones in the room—the anxious supplications of a blundering pleader, and the quiet denials of a sweet voice that seemed pained by what it said.

Then Fred sprang up, exclaiming—

"Then hang me if I don't exchange into the oth Light Drags, and go out to India!"

"Why, what for, Fred?" exclaimed Mary, starting from her husband's close embrace.

"Because after all that has passed, here's Maude



—Maude declares that it isn't proper for cousins to—

"Hadn't you better come down and make the tea, darling?" said Harris, smiling.

"Ten o'clock!" exclaimed Mary, referring to her

watch, and only ascertaining the time after holding it very close to the window.

After which she placed her graceful little figure within the protecting arm that guided her down to the drawing-room.

"Do you people want any tea?" shouted Harris, some quarter of an hour after, at the foot of the top flight of stairs.

Something in the shape of an answer came; and soon after Fred and Maude made their appearance in the drawing-room, blinking a good deal, and complaining of the difficulty of seeing when first coming into a lighted room; while from the encircling arm round Maude's waist it seemed as if she had altered her opinion respecting the propriety of a cousin guardian.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—SHORN OF GLORY.

CAPTAIN VERREY only came once more into contact with the other characters who have figured in this work, and then under circumstances not of the most pleasant for himself.

Spring had been surpassing herself upon one of these occasions—the goose-skinning easterly winds had expended their fury, the showers of April had come to an end, and the sun reigned supreme—at all events, in the country, twenty-four miles round London. Buds had burst into the loveliest green, the silver hawthorn-wreaths scented the gale, the roads were not more dusty than usual, jobbing gardeners turned up their noses at small jobs, on account of the great demand upon their services to touch up fronts and backs of suburban residences.

All London was out, for it was a glorious day; and who would stop at home if he could by any means get away upon that of all days in the year when the blue ribbon of the turf was to be run for? From early morning the roads had been thronged with every description of vehicle, from that drawn by the much-abused, patient-under-stripes, but decidedly heel-lifting donkey, to the tip-top drag, with its four spankers driven by a "heavy" in the latest-moulded white hat, and with the gauziest of gauzy veils—a gentleman who considers it the thing to drive upon such occasions in white kid gloves, which are specially adapted for the double reins of a pulling team. The railway clerks had grown, if anything, a trifle more curt; and perhaps it was excusable upon so busy a day. All London was out, and by some means made its appearance upon the bonny green downs of Epsom, snuffing the sweet breezes of Surrey as they were wafted over sandy hill or chalky plain, laden too with the scents of many a pine wood. Black in places with the swarming crowds—black relieved with the colours of the rainbow, subdued by chalk dust that the busy cads could not remove. Epsom Downs as of old—as they have been so well described, and so well painted again and again: but not where a quiet barouche was drawn up in a good position for viewing the various races, and in which sat two who took but little interest in the sports, but gazed in an amused way at the ever-restless, motley throng surging round them—containing, too, a couple who preferred to stand; the dark-haired, slightly-formed girl—well, yes, girl yet, though the wife of a dragon

captain—leaning upon her stalwart husband's arm, as he, *au fait* in the proceedings, pointed out and explained all that came within their ken—for as he, Frederick Dean, informed his lady, this was the tenth Derby he had witnessed.

All at once there arose a disturbance a short distance behind the carriage, wherein were mingled shouts of anger, laughter, and appeals for mercy. The crowd swayed backwards and forwards, arms were tossing, and the ladies in the barouche clung to their companions as the disturbance grew louder, and the tide of the affray swept nearer and nearer to where they were.

"By Jove! what a row!" cried Fred, gazing eagerly towards the scene, and his heavy features lighting up as he made a half-movement to get out of the carriage.

"Oh, pray don't go, Fred!" whispered Maude.

"All right," he said, turning lovingly towards the speaker, and then gazing earnestly again towards the fray.

"Better out of it, Fred," said Harris Morley. "But really it does seem too bad. Where are the police? they'll half kill that poor fellow."

"There, I'm hanged if I can stand it!" cried Fred, after looking on for another half minute, biting the ends of his great moustache, and tearing at his beard. "Here, Harry, take care of Maude."

And before expostulation could be offered, he had leaped from the carriage, and charged into the thick of the crowd, sending men over right and left, until he had made his way to a poor wretch, who, with bleeding face, garments torn to rags, hair rough, and half strangled by the many hands dragging at the remnants of his handkerchief, was being thrust from one to another, buffeted, kicked, struck at, and so savagely used, that unless his constitution had been somewhat stronger than that of other men, the probabilities were that he would soon have been killed.

"A welcher! a welcher!" roared the crowd.

"Stand back, you confounded cowards!" shouted Fred, fiercely.

And to enforce his commands he delivered a right and a left straight from the shoulders that would have won admiration from the late Tom Sayers himself, then a contemporary of Fred's. Fine, well-dealt, thoroughly English blows they were, that took effect with a smart report in each case, and had the good effect of clearing a space for a few seconds. But it would soon have gone ill with the one who charged; for an angry murmur arose, and blows began to fall from all around; and though Fred made the most use he could of his strength and skill, he found that he was no match for so many adversaries; while matters were made worse by the abject behaviour of the "welcher," who clung to his coat, and pitifully besought him not to leave him.

"Lend a hand then, will you!" growled Fred between his teeth, hitting out viciously all the while—the more viciously from the fact of his having caught a glimpse of a frightened face in the carriage hard by, and a pair of little kid-gloved hands stretched towards him.

"That's a fair hit," he muttered, as a man who had given him two or three unpleasant proofs of his prowess went down as if crushed. "And you won't

get over that easily," said Fred, as he made another beat a retreat, holding his head down and shaking it as if to get rid of an unpleasant buzzing sensation.

But Fred, in spite of a sturdy auxiliary in the shape of Harris Morley, who dashed unwillingly, but nevertheless earnestly, into the fray, would have come off almost in as bad condition as the man whose cause he had espoused, but for the sudden melting of the crowd at the appearance of three glazed-topped hats; and Fred, in his blind fury, was about to deliver his next blow upon the person of A somethingty-eight, only his arm was restrained by his friend. However, explanations took place, and ten minutes after, the champion was sitting hot and angry in the barouche, cooling himself with a cigar, though the heaving of his breast told how the remains of the tempest yet surged within him; while with anxious, agitated face Maude was tremblingly applying her delicate laced handkerchief to his bruised and bleeding knuckles.

"Well, 'pon my soul, it was stupid and Quixotic of me, I must own," he said at last, with a good-tempered smile; "but what could a fellow do but pitch into the cowardly set? He was a rogue and a cheat, I know; but then look how they were serving him. And I did get my paper back cheap."

"What had he done?" whispered Maude.

"Oh, nothing you'd understand, dear. Been cheating in the betting ring—laying wagers and not paying his losses. Only think, though, Harry, for me to go and get bullied and hammered about to such a tune for that scoundrel! I shouldn't have known him if it hadn't been for that inspector—the very man who made the haul in Jermyn-street, when the beggar turned evidence. Didn't he look small, though, when he saw who had been helping him!"

"Pity you did, almost," said Harris; "and yet I don't know, though," he said, smiling, for he had encountered his wife's reproachful eyes. "Pity, though, to have to fight as you did."

"Pray be more careful, Fred," whispered Maude.

"Be a good boy, and never do so any more," whispered Fred, in a mock penitent tone; and then aloud—"Well, I don't think Captain Verrey will show himself again in the ring."

CHAPTER XXXIV.—"ABIDE WITH ME."

IN after days of peace and happiness, the seaside always had a strange fascination for Harris Morley and his fair young wife. At first Mary had shrunk from the thought of a visit to the coast, from a dread that it might have some influence upon her husband, by bringing up the sorrows and pains of the past; but the proposal came from him regularly year by year; and upon some rock by the washing waters they would take their places evening after evening, he at her feet, looking up to her with the old loving trust. And more than once, when evening was closing in, and its shades hid their acts from prying looks, he knelt at those feet with her hands pressed to his brow, and wept those same tears of thankfulness that had once welled from his eyes. Those were times when no words were spoken, but heart spake to heart more fluently than ever.

But they went no more to Hastings.

Mary had her thoughts, too, of her own sorrows; and gazing over the far expanse of heaving waters before her, she would recall the night when, kneeling with her sister by the cabin window of the *Southern Cross*, they had prayed for pardon for the daring act they were about to commit. She would then rouse herself with a shudder from these sad dreams, and with a prayer for the brave man who had been her saviour, sink back against the strong arm that now stole round her, feeling its protection, wherein she rejoiced; while at the same time a feeling, half of sadness, came upon her.

It was upon one of these nights that they were slowly returning to the hotel where they were staying, at a little village upon the coast in the West. It was a quiet, retired spot, only just beginning to be known to visitors, and as yet the simple and quaint held its own against the half-dozen stucco lodging-houses and the hotel but lately opened. Half-pay officers, families of limited means, and people interested in the herring, mackerel, and pilchard fishery, formed the principal portion of the inhabitants. But Harris had heard of the place from a friend, whose enthusiastic description of its picturesque appearance proved not to have been exaggerated. And now, arm in arm in the soft moonlight, Harris and his wife walked homeward over the sand that led them through the break in the rocks, beyond which the village lay; while as soon as ever they had passed the rocky boundary, the washing of the waves became fainter and fainter, till it was heard only as a gentle murmur.

"What a night!" said Harris, as they stood looking at the scene before them—the little church bathed in the silver flood of moonlight, cottages here in shadow, there in full view, while lights shone through many a window.

"What a pity we could not have stayed at one of these cottages, instead of that hotel," said Mary.

And then they both paused; for from an open French window of a better-class abode beside them came the tones of a piano—solemn, thrilling, and heart-touching, for it seemed that a master-hand was at the keys, while the wondrous chords of that majestic chant, and the words of "Abide with me," floated softly out upon the night air.

"Abide with me; fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide."

And on and on, verse after verse; while Mary, as touched to the quick she heard under such circumstances the words and divine strains, felt her husband's arm tremble, and looking up in his face saw that it was ghastly pale, for the moonlight shone full upon it.

Then she began to tremble herself; for, clutching her tightly, he led her slowly towards the gate, and silently they drew nearer and nearer to the open window, their steps being inaudible upon the grass plot. And now in a moment her woman's wit told her all, as they stood gazing between the muslin blinds into a plainly furnished parlour, where, seated at the instrument, her face in the full light of the lamp, was the performer whose evening hymn had so strangely thrilled them; but not more so than did now the wild, pale, unnaturally thin

face, wasted fearfully, while the eyes shone out with a strange lustre, as the light seemed reflected from them. Simply dressed, but possessed of a commanding mien, and, in spite of the ghastly pallor, displaying lineaments she had often recalled, Mary felt in whose presence she was standing; and a strange pang shot through her—a pang that for the moment was jealousy, till she reviewed the past, and blushed for her unworthy thought.

And still the strains came floating out, the singer throwing her soul into words and music, till it seemed so real that Mary's vivid imagination painted a dying scene, and transformed the pallid woman into a parting sinner appealing to her God, as in a wild, impassioned way, came forth the words—

"Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!"

Her spirit was overwrought, and as she uttered the last words she could not contain the sob that burst from her breast; and then Mary started, for the curtains were parted right and left, and the strange, ghastly face was gazing out upon them—gazing full upon Harris Morley. And then arose a wild and bitter cry—so piercing, so hopeless in its misery, that those who heard it shuddered, while they stooped to lift the figure that lay prone at their feet—crushed down as it were, and grovelling in a heap as she lay.

Weeks—months of tender sympathy, of gentle attention—"coming and going from her room like an angel sent in answer to her prayer," said Hester Levigne, as again and again she wept upon Mary Morley's hand, and told of her sorrow and repentance; but once, and once only, had there been an interview between Harris and the dying woman. Her little school was closed from the day upon which she encountered the visitors to the village; and other hands brought strains on Sundays from the harmonium in the quaint old church. But often in the stillness of the autumn evenings, unknown to any one, Harris Morley stood alone outside the cottage, his head bent down upon his hands, as, in obedience to the dying woman's request, Mary sat at her piano, and playing again and again those same solemn, never-tiring strains—her sweet, pure voice floating softly out upon the air to where stood her husband, listening ever, till he heard her rise as if to leave, when he would contrive to meet her with the appearance of having but that moment come up to the gate.

Long watchings, long prayers, long shuddering interviews, and whispers of hope and trust in the forgiveness of a Creator; sighs of thankfulness that, though in intent a murderess, she had been saved from that crime; and then passionate appeals to Mary to leave her to her fate—appeals which the gentle woman responded to by soothing words and kisses that must have been heaven-born; and then the fast-approaching end.

Carried down day by day to the sofa, Hester

Levigne seemed now to live only for the society of Mary, who came like sunlight into the room, and never tired in her attendance. Words to Harris upon the subject of her neglect of him produced but a tender caress, while he would then lead her to the cottage-gate, whispering—

"Some of the sin was with me, darling—want of thought, weakness, neglect. Help me to make what reparation I can, that we may feel that some of the briars have been removed from this poor thing's thorny path."

For Harris Morley felt that it was not for long; and night by night he took his station where the window was blind-shaded, and listened to the deep, mournful chant with the same feelings, as he pondered upon the strange ways of his life, and the manner in which the webs of these three fates had been interwoven; while now, one was soon to be no more, for the last unravelled strands seemed almost lost, as, colourless and feeble, they yet clung between the others.

But the end was at hand. One night he stood listening and waiting, for it was nearly Mary's hour to return. The wind sighed, and the murmur of the waves beyond the rocky barrier seemed at times to rise almost into a roar; but still came the soft strains, and his wife's rich, pure voice; and with a strange sense upon him, Harris hearkened, as in a lull of the wind came the words—

"Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death—"

Then there was a sudden pause, and with an icy feeling at his heart Harris hurried to the window, opened it, and stepped in to catch Mary, as, rising from the couch, she reeled and would have fallen, had he not borne her softly out and summoned the assistance that he knew was of no avail.

THE END.

Washing at Home made Pleasant and Profitable.

BRADFORD'S "VOWEL" WASHING MACHINES will wash every domestic article, from Baby Linen to Bedding, more efficiently, more conveniently, and with less wear to the clothes than by any other method, and with careful management will repay their cost in a few months.

No Family where the washing is done at home should be without a suitably sized "Vowel" Machine.

Some idea of the value of the "Vowel" Machine may be formed when the following facts are considered; not only have we received upwards of 18,000 letters of testimony, irrespective of some thousands in the possession of Agents, but we at the present time hold upwards of 150 First Prize Medals and Awards, including the following:—

LONDON, 1862. PARIS, 1867. VIENNA, 1873.

And Two First Prize Medals—

BRUSSELS, 1876.

No other Prize Medals have been awarded to any other Washing Machines at any of the above-mentioned Exhibitions.

For further particulars and larger sizes, Hand Power, and Steam Power, see General Illustrated Catalogue, sent on application, free by post, to

THOMAS BRADFORD and CO.,

140, 141, 142, and 143, High Holborn, LONDON.

And Manchester and Liverpool.

WHY RUN ANY RISK in the choice of a Sewing Machine, when the best of all machines for family work may be had for a Month's Free Trial in your Own Home, before purchase, and carriage paid? The Willcox and Gibbs Silent Sewing Machine, with Automatic Tension, Self-adjusting Needle, and many other important improvements, will be sent to any one on the above terms. No charge of any kind is made, even in case of the return of the machine. The "New Automatic" is a marvel of mechanical excellence, and is almost without liability to derangement. It is entirely noiseless when in use, and the most inexperienced use it at once, and do perfect work upon it. The sewing is unequalled in uniformity and beauty, and as elastic and durable as the best knitting. Test these claims by making use of our free trial at home. Apply to any of our certified agents, who may be found in all important towns, or to Willcox and Gibbs Sewing Machine Company, 150, Cheapside, E.C., and 135, Regent-street, London; 10, Cross-street (Royal Exchange), Manchester; 113, Union-street, Glasgow; 32, New-road (facing North-street), Brighton; 15, Mercery-lane, Canterbury.—[ADVT.]

A HENPECKED husband declared that the longer he lived with his wife the more he was smitten by her.

A CONTEMPORARY cautions its lady readers, when they are dressed in velvet, against sitting down on cane-bottomed chairs. Miss Fanny Kemble once, when she found such a chair provided for her at one of her readings in the west, turned upon the leading committeeman a basilisk glance, and exclaimed, "Man, do you wish me to give my best velvet gown the small-pox?"

MARVELLOUS COCOA
The very perfection of prepared Cocoa.
COLLIER & SONS.
CHOCOLATE POWDER.

ESTABD 1812. LONDON



500,000
SAMPLE PACKETS OF THIS DELICIOUS COCOA WERE GIVEN AWAY AT THE EXHIBITION 1862.

MADE INSTANTLY WITH BOILING WATER ONLY. MILK & SUGAR NOT BEING NECESSARY.
Sold by all Grocers & Chemists.
1/4 per lb or 1/6 in 1 lb Square tins 1/4 each.

TESTIMONIALS.
"PARTICULARLY EASY OF DIGESTION"
Press & St James's Chronicle
"IS PREFERRED TO ALMOST ANY OTHER"
Dr. Riddock's Vaude Merum.

EQUALS ANY WITH WHICH WE HAVE MET. Homoeopathic World.

PREPARED BY J. COLLIER & SONS, LONDON.
Manufacturers of all kinds of Cocoa, French Eating and Fancy Chocolates, Chocolate Creams, &c.
PURVEYORS OF MUSTARD TO THE EXHIBITION'S 1871.2.3&4.

113 & 115, BOROUGH, AND
RAILWAY APPROACH, LONDON BRIDGE, S.E.

Butter and Ham Season,

1878.

Having completed our purchases of STILTON CHEESES for the Season, we beg to solicit your orders to reserve any number you are likely to require, and thus enable us to ensure you Rich and Ripe Cheese for New Year Presents.

We are glad to be able to state that the quality this year is much better than it has been for several years past.

Waiting the favour of your commands,

We are, yours obediently,

T. SHEPPARD & CO.

A SHOPMAN making up a customer's order noticed in the list of items, "Half-circle of Paul Delaroche." "Who is Paul Delaroche?" he inquired. "The painter," answered the customer. "Where does he live?" "He died long ago." "But somebody must be carrying on the business. Here, boy, get me a directory?"

SEWING MACHINES

Lower than any other House in London.

ARTHUR CLEGG AND CO.

Supply every description of Sewing Machine at 2s. 6d. Weekly.
1s. in the Pound discount for Cash.

WHEELER and WILSON	from £3 0 0
SINGER'S	" 2 15 0
HOWE'S	" 2 10 0
THOMAS'S	" 3 0 0
WILLCOX and GIBBS	" 3 5 0

All the above are on Stands complete.

CLEGG'S Lock Stitch	" 5 10 0
CLEGG'S Chain Stitch	" 5 0 0
CLEGG'S Shuttle (for Tailors)	" 5 5 0
CLEGG'S Shuttle (Howe principle, for Bootmakers)	" 6 0 0
CLEGG'S Elastic (Bootmakers, for Repairing Boots)	" 8 8 0

All Machines of our own make are warranted perfect when sold, and are kept in order one year free of charge.

Instructions free to purchasers.

Repairs of all kinds while waiting.

Needles for Singer's and others from 9d. per dozen. Spools parts, &c., equally low.

31, Finsbury-place, E.O.

BARRAUD AND LUNDS,

41, Cornhill, London, E.C.,

MANUFACTURERS OF

Chronometers, Watches, and Clocks.

SPECIALITIES FOR FOREIGN MARKETS.

Their St. Petersburg agent writes:—"Nos. 2,095 and 2,096 are simple *perfections of watches*, and fully come up to the requirements of our market in all respects."

Half Chronometers,

Keyless or Plain, as supplied to Captain Sartorius in Persia.*

"Improved" Levers.

A watch for *universal use*, a reliable timekeeper at a moderate cost. Compensated and adjusted. 25 guineas.

The "Railway" Lever,

In silver cases, compensated and adjusted. Strong, moderate in size, *recommended*. 10 guineas.

* Vide Pamphlet on "Horological Telegraphy." Post free, gratis.

THE richest man, whatever his lot, is he who is contented with what he has.

"STICKIN THE TUNE."—A precentor in one of the kirks of Scotland, by mistake, commenced to sing a different psalm to that given by the minister, the result being that by the time the end of the second line was reached, matters had come to a dead-lock between him and the congregation. Instead of fainting, as he might have been expected to do, the precentor kept quite cool, preserving his presence of mind under the trying circumstances; and, as the simplest way of getting out of the difficulty, he turned round to the minister, and made the appropriate remark, "Go on with your sermon—the thing's stickin'!"

BAUMGARTEN'S INVIGORATIVE NERVE ESSENCE.

A most powerful nutritive cordial, which restores to their normal condition all the secretions on the integrity of which perfect health depends.

REPORT BY DR. HASSALL.

"Having analysed the preparation to which Messrs. Baumgarten & Co. have given the name of 'Invigorating Nerve Essence,' I am of opinion that it is a combination well calculated, from its containing, among other ingredients, PEPSINE and PHOSPHATE of SODA, to prove MOST SERVICEABLE to the DEBILITATED, the NERVOUS, and the DYSPEPTIC."

Price 2s. 9d. and 4s. 6d. per bottle. To be had of most chemists, or forwarded on receipt of P.O.O. or stamps, by the Sole Agents, Brant and Co., 283, Strand, London, W.C.

£1000 if Killed, with liberal allowances if injured in a RAILWAY ACCIDENT for 12s. Annually, or by SINGLE PAYMENT covering 5, 10, or 20 years, or the WHOLE LIFE. ACCIDENTS OF ALL KINDS insured against by Annual Premiums. Railway and General Accident Company (Lim.). 43, POULTRY. W. BURR, F.S.S., Manager. — Prospectuses Free.

"I CAME off with flying colours," as the painter said when he fell from a ladder with a palette on his thumb.

HOW TO CLEAN SILVER.—"I now use the Imperial Polishing Cloths in preference to any other method; they are cleanly and most effective." Sold by Chemists, Ironmongers, &c., at 1s. per box, or sent direct for 1s. 2d. in stamps. Manufactured and chemically prepared by the Imperial Linen Co., 68, Coleman-street, London.—[ADVT.]

A DIRECT ANSWER.—On one of the occasions when Lord Palmerston was returned as a member for Tiverton, a Radical butcher, named Rowcliffe, attracted the attention of the crowd at the hustings by calling out in stentorian tones, "My lord, I want to ask you a *plain, straightforward question*." "My good friend Rowcliffe," was the reply, "I will give a *plain, straightforward answer*." (Immense cheering.) "My lord, will you or will you not vote for the £6 franchise?" "Friend Rowcliffe, I—will—not—TELL—YOU!" (Roars of laughter, and immediate collapse of the butcher.)

JONES'S Neuralgic Mixture gives immediate Relief in cases of Toothache, Neuralgia, and all affections of the nerves. In Bottles, 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d. each.—Jones's Bilious and Liver Pills are the best Family Aperient Pills, and are equally adapted to young and old of both sexes. In Boxes, 1s. each.—Jones's Gout and Rheumatic Mixture is both safe and certain in its effects in all cases of Rheumatism and Rheumatic Gout. In Bottles, 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., each.—Jones's Digestive Pills are invaluable as a Dinner Pill, and most useful to all who suffer from Indigestion or Dyspepsia. In Boxes, 1s. each.—To be had of all Chemists; or from Proprietor, W. H. JONES, Chemist and Druggist, 406, Caledonian-road, Islington, N.—[ADVT.]

AT the trial recently of a woman for poisoning her husband, the medical man who had made the *post mortem* affirmed that he had found sufficient arsenic in the body of the murdered man to kill five people. "What of that?" cried the accused, "my husband was always a large eater."

YOUNG'S Arnicated Corn and Bunion Plaisters are the best ever invented for giving immediate ease, and removing those painful excrescences. Price 6d. and 1s. per box. Any chemist not having them in stock can procure them. Observe the Trade Mark —H.Y.—without which none are genuine. Be sure and ask for YOUNG'S.—[ADVT.]

AMUSEMENT, it has been well said, is the waking sleep of labour. But when it absorbs thought, patience, and strength that might have been seriously employed, it loses its distinctive character, and becomes the task-work of idleness.

A NEW recipient of judicial honours in Alabama was reminded, after the argument in a case being tried before him was closed, that he was the jury, and rose and said—"Gemmen of de jury, I charge you half a dollar a-piece, and I say you must pay it before de case goes on."



